

Naxi and Ethnic Tourism
A Study of Homestay Tourism in Lijiang Old Town

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Abstract

Entitled: Naxi and Ethnic Tourism: A Study of Homestay Tourism in Lijiang Old Town

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This research studies homestay tourism in Lijiang Old Town (Yunnan Province, China) since the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognized Lijiang Old Town as a “World Cultural Heritage Site” in December 1997. Homestay tourism has become important in Lijiang today. The thesis is based on three months’ ethnographic fieldwork in Lijiang from June to August 2001. By focusing on the practices of local guesthouse owners in Lijiang Old Town, this research attempts to illustrate how Naxi people today (re)construct the “authentic Naxiness” from their interaction with tourists, the Lijiang government, the migrants, the local hotels, the foreign NGOs such as UNESCO, as well as scholars and professionals, all of which are involved in Lijiang’s tourism and the local development.

The homestay guesthouse business has caused Naxi people in Lijiang to encounter interwoven forces as forged by tourism and heritage conservation. From these encounters, both local and global agents have influential impacts on the development of the guesthouses in Lijiang Old Town. From the “home” of Naxi to the “heritage” of the world, guesthouses in Lijiang seem to have become a truly transnational conversation site, where local and global agents continue to argue on its development, as well as the “authenticity” and “heritage preservation” of the Naxi culture. While the expansion of tourism in Lijiang appears to diminish the “Naxi

authenticity”, the increasing involvement of international organizations seems to help “preserve” such “authenticity”. This research, however, finds that the “authenticity” conceptualized by UNESCO and academic authority is constantly being (re)constructed by the local and global agents. In other words, there is no fixed or innate “authenticity” about the past or the present Naxi culture as it is actually a phenomenon packaged by various dynamic agents. Thus, I suggest that the project of “World Heritage” led by UNESCO in Lijiang Old Town is reinforcing the reconstruction of imagined past Naxi culture rather than “preserving” its “authentic” cultural heritage.

摘 要

随着“文化旅游”和“民族旅游”在全球范围内的迅速发展,“民居客栈旅游”作为一种崭新的旅游形式,近年来在享有联合国教科文组织授予“世界文化遗产”称号的丽江古城兴起. 藉着对丽江古城近三个月的田野调查,作者尝试透过当地纳西人在经营“民居客栈”中的日常实践来探讨所谓的“正宗纳西文化”的建构(或再建构)过程.

民居客栈旅游的兴起使得丽江古城的纳西人,尤其是客栈主人遭遇到了不同的力量群体: 游客, 移民, 当地政府, 各界专家学者, 以及国际组织. 他们对“正宗纳西文化”带来的不同理解潜移默化地影响着当地人的生活方式. 客栈主人通过采用各种对策与不同群体和权威的积极争论和“协商”展现出纳西人在诠释和建构自身文化中的能动性. 在此“协商”过程中, 纳西传统文化的“正宗性”被再生产和再建构. 而那些“文化保护”或“遗产保护”的权威机构也不过是在帮助当地人重建其过去的纳西文化. 本研究旨在阐明, 在今天丽江古城的民居客栈中, 人们看到的纳西文化更多的不是对“传统”的继承和保护, 而是在当地人和各方力量群体的共同作用下对纳西“传统文化”的重新解释, 创造和发明.

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Note: At the time of study, US\$ 1.00 = RMB¥ 8.32.

Chapter 1

Introduction

“A nice picture!” said Ann beside me, taking out her camera for a snapshot. In the direction she was looking, I saw two old Naxi women in their traditional clothes chatting in front of an old house. “Old town, old house, and old Naxi, how beautiful...” Ann had not finished her compliment yet when the two old women came up to us, saying something in the Naxi language with a certain hand gesture. “What do they mean?” Ann asked. “Money for the picture,” I said. I do not remember the expression that was on Ann’s face at that moment: surprise, disappointment, or wryness, but I do remember the question that Ann asked after she gave them ten *yuan* each, “Aren’t they real Naxi?” I just shrugged. This happened in November 1999, on my first visit to Lijiang with some friends, when Lijiang had already become one of the most popular tourist destinations in China.

“Aren’t they real Naxi?”—just a tourist’s common question. I did not find it so meaningful and interesting until I began to immerse myself in the anthropological study of tourism. The question is not as simple as it sounds at first in that it carries many issues in itself: What is “real” Naxi culture? What is a “real” Naxi like? Is there an essential “authentic Naxiness”? Have the “real” Naxi people been changed by commercialization of tourism development? Can the “authentic” Naxi culture be “conserved” with the diffusion of today’s international tourism? In addition, the forms of cultural tourism, particularly ethnic tourism, are actively encouraged by many developing countries as a main avenue in the pursuit of economic growth in the past

twenty years. The peoples and their cultures are subject to considerable changes due to the impacts of tourism, the so-called “smokeless industry,” that involves globalization and commoditization.

In light of these concerns, there is certainly much more to say about the question “Aren’t they real Naxi?” than just the shrug that I gave when I was a tourist. Nonetheless, there is no simple answer since interpretations can vary with changing contexts and times. In short, tourism itself is a complex issue, which requires on-going discussions (or interpretations) and further elaborations at a deeper level or from a new perspective.

Scope of Study

Ethnic Tourism in Lijiang

My research mainly tackles “ethnic tourism” in Lijiang. As two forms that derive from “ethnic tourism”, “homestay tourism” and “heritage tourism” are also explored in the research. Before going further, we need to know how “ethnic tourism” is defined.

In *Hosts and Guests* (1989), Smith identifies five types of tourism, namely, ethnic tourism, cultural tourism, historical tourism, environmental tourism, and recreational tourism. She points out that “ethnic tourism” was marketed to the public in terms of the “quaint” customs of indigenous and exotic peoples that attract only “a limited number of visitors motivated by curiosity and elite peer approval” (1989:4). But this does not seem well defined any more in today’s world when increasing “mass

tourists” claim that their main motivation for tourism is “to experience other culture(s)”. Also, the difference in definition between the five types of tourism in Smith’s classification still remains vague. Rather, in one of his recent papers, Cohen (2001:27-28) provides a clarification of the concept of “ethnic tourism”:

(1) A variety of “site-seeing” tourism that (2) targets groups that do not fully belong, culturally, socially, or politically to the majority (national) population of the state within whose boundaries they live and that are (3) touristically “marked,” owing to their alleged ecological boundedness (Wood 1997:6) or cultural distinctiveness, uniqueness, or ‘otherness’.

Today, ethnic tourism no longer serves merely “a limited number of visitors motivated by curiosity and elite peer approval” as viewed by Smith. According to Cohen (2001:27), “ethnic tourism” has become one of the most popular forms of tourism in the Third World as well as in Southeast Asia; it is also the most frequently researched topic in the sociological and anthropological study of tourism. Ethnic tourism in China, particularly in the territories of minority groups (such as the Naxi) has had its boom in the last two decades. Its impact on the local places, peoples, and their cultures as well as the process of ethnic tourism itself obviously merit more and closer attention from concerned fields of study.

I chose Lijiang Old Town as the fieldsite for this research. Lijiang is a county (Lijiang Naxi Autonomous County) of 340,000 people, located at the edge of the Tibetan Plateau in northwest Yunnan Province in China. With its impressive geographical scenery and remarkable traditional lifestyle of the Naxi inhabitants, Lijiang has attracted millions of tourists from all over the world each year since the 1990s. The Naxi culture is seen as an even greater draw than the natural attractions. As the center of

Naxi culture and the seat of Naxi traditional political authority, Dayan Town, more commonly known in English as Lijiang Old Town, has become the focus of ethnic tourism in Lijiang. In December 1997, Lijiang Old Town was inscribed in the UNESCO's prestigious World Heritage List. This recognition has encouraged even faster tourism expansion in Lijiang County and in the Old Town itself. In the meantime, Lijiang's recognition as a "World Heritage" site is said to ensure the "sustainable" tourism development in Lijiang, by arousing the sense of "stewardship" of the local people over their heritage and by receiving more international financial and technical supports from the world through UNESCO. Today, it is impossible to talk about Lijiang's development without addressing the impact from tourism on all aspects of life. With tourism burgeoning in Lijiang Old Town, "homestay tourism" appears to have grown rapidly in recent years and has become one of the private enterprises run mostly by the indigenous Naxi. By the time I completed fieldwork in late August 2001, there were about eighty Naxi-home "guesthouses" that served homestay tourists in Lijiang Old Town. So many "Naxi homestay guesthouses", which are concentrated and have increased within such a small community, have become another distinctive feature of the Old Town. This also makes "homestay tourism" an important issue in the agenda of discussion on Lijiang's ethnic tourism as well as its local development.

Research Questions and Objectives

While many scholars think of "ethnic tourism" or "indigenous tourism" (Swain 1989) as an effective way to work out the "authenticity of a culture" for tourists, I also look at it as a great challenge to today's Naxi people and their existing culture in Lijiang.

The appearance of a new form of ethnic tourism, homestay tourism, is an important economic and cultural phenomenon. The proliferation of homestay guesthouses in Lijiang Old Town implies not only a new trend in tourist consumption but also another contested site where the local and global agents contend with each other over their understanding of the “authentic” Naxi culture.

What makes the homestay tourism in Lijiang so interesting is the infiltration of the “heritage conservation” discourse since UNESCO inscribed Lijiang Old Town in the World Heritage List in 1997. In this discourse, the houses of the local people are subject to conservation as a key part of the Naxi heritage. Thus, the recent appearance of homestay tourism relying on the local houses is viewed as a means of killing two birds with one stone, capable of both increasing the income of the indigenous families and encouraging them to conserve their heritage, namely, their houses. However, as I found in the field, this project of “heritage conservation” led by UNESCO has ignited an intense struggle in which the local Naxi guesthouse entrepreneurs and global agents are actively shaping the idea of the “authentic” Naxi culture and heritage. Through this research, I understand both Naxi culture and Naxi heritage not as stable, inert or passive entities, but as being under (re)construction by the contributions and joint efforts of many agents.

In summary, this project aims to create a deeper understanding of how the so-called “authentic Naxi culture” is (re)constructed by both local and global agents through the dynamic encounters forged by tourism and “world heritage”. Through the business of the homestay guesthouse, an important economic activity of the indigenous (Naxi) people in Lijiang Old Town, I will examine how the different players understand

discourses about Lijiang authenticity, ethnicity, home, heritage and heritage conservation. From this, a picture of how today's Naxi people apply strategies in coping with other agents such as tourists, the local government, local hotels, migrants, UNESCO, scholars and professionals is pieced together.

The Development of Naxi Studies

Naxi and the West

Naxi, this small ethnic minority with “nothing very remarkable” (Jackson 1989:133) in Northwest Yunnan Province of China, has been studied for almost a century. In particular, as Jackson observes, “It just so happens that they have been more written about in the West than any other minority nationality in China [except the Tibetans] and they have become famous almost by default.”

Like Jackson, many scholars of Naxi studies attribute this worldwide reputation of the Naxi people to J. F. Rock, who wrote a score of books and articles about the Naxi between 1924 and 1972. As Jackson (1989:132) states, “such a concentration of publications on a single people is almost bound to make them famous”. In fact, prior to Rock, some missionaries and scholars from France, Holland, and Britain had explored Yunnan and sent a lot of Naxi mss (manuscripts of Dongba ritual scriptures) back to their countries “even if they did not know what they had acquired, other than that the mss, were precious, rare and ancient” (Jackson 1989:135). In Jackson's survey of the world-wide collections of Naxi mss, it shows that there are more mss in private hands in the USA than anywhere else regardless of those scattered in different collections of

which there is no record to date. Apart from Rock's contribution, the vast volumes of Naxi mss written in a unique pictographic script which arrived at various Western libraries as early as nearly a century ago have puzzled the West's for years and inspired the West enthusiasm in studying Naxi and its Dongba religion.

However, the first Western scholars were mainly interested in the superficial language and rituals from the Dongba mss, not really in the people themselves. Thus, according to Jackson, "it must be admitted that it was Rock, for all his faults, who puts the Naxi on the cultural map of the world." From 1924 to 1944, Rock's handful of articles supplied to the English-speaking world was all that was known about the Dongba mss of the Naxi. In 1947, Rock's real masterpiece, *The Ancient Na-khi Kingdom of Southwest China*, was published by Harvard University, which is viewed as the first account which gave a reasonable explanation of the Naxi people themselves without much reference to their peculiar rituals (Jackson 1989:137).

In his paper that traced the history of the Naxi studies before the late 1980s, Jackson (1989) thought it strange that there were so many people studying the Naxi. It is interesting to note that the official name of "Naxi" was not given to this minority group by the state until the 1950s (McKhann 1998:5). As McKhann states, prior to the 1950s, since at least the Tang dynasty (618-907) all of the peoples (presently known as Naxi, Mosuo, and Meng) who inhabited in the Yunnan-Sichuan-Tibet border region were called Naxi. But, "largely in accordance with the wishes of the numerically superior and politically more influential Lijiang area groups, among whom 'Naxi' had long been a term of self-ascription." The decision to change the official ethnonym to "Naxi" was made in the 1950s by the state though the underlying category however remains the

same (McKhann 1998:6). In this paper about the ethnicity, kinship, politics and ritual on the Yunnan-Sichuan frontier, McKhann suggests that “ethnic identity may always mean quite different things to anthropologists, whose concerns lie with understanding the varieties of local experience, and to representatives of the state, for whom the project of classification, born of the desire for power, implies the subjugation of local consciousness” (ibid.:6). That means, the ethnic identity (like “Naxi”) is neither an inherent entity nor a strictly political ethnonym; indeed, it is the product of varieties of interpretations and meanings in different fields.

To some extent, McKhann’s historical research on the ethnic groups in Lijiang has elaborated Chao’s (1996) earlier exploration of the “Dongba culture” of the Naxi people. By addressing the promotion and politics of ethnic representation in post-Mao China, Chao reveals how the workings of local agency and state hegemony are inseparable in the (re)invention of Dongba culture, which has been identified as equated with the authenticity of Naxi culture (Chao 1996:208-236). According to Chao, “Naxi” was not “the domain of ordinary people but rather was identified with specific practices that were best articulated by specialists, particularly the institute’s scholars of Dongba practice and the former religious practitioners called *dongbas*” (Chao 1996:209). In addition, the ethnographical studies of Mueggler (1991) and White (1997) are both concerned with the construction of Naxi identities in which state power has played a key role.

In short, recent studies on the “Naxi” contributed by Western anthropologists have explored the ethnic construction of the “Naxi” and the underpinning cultural politics.

Naxi Studies in China

The Naxi and Han scholars prior to 1949 had written almost exclusively about the Naxi language and the different Dongba scripts, though Jackson (1989:139) views their works as “restricted” by these scholars’ limited knowledge of the scripts and the content of the Dongba mss, and which “need to be rechecked”. Similarly, early scholars on Naxi studies such as Yang Zhonghong, Zhou Rucheng, Zhao Yingtang, Fang Guoyu, Li Lincan and Fu Maoji (Jackson 1989, Guo and Li 1999) had focused on Naxi script and pictograph, Dongba religion, and Naxi’s linguistic literatures.

The results of several research groups’ studies of Naxi in the 1960s, were finally published in some Chinese volumes in the 1980s, such as *Investigation of Naxi’s Society and History* (1983), *A Concise Naxi History* (1984), and *Naxi Society and Matrilineal Family in Ninglang Yi Autonomous Prefecture* (1986). This led Naxi studies in China from a focus on Naxi history, linguistics, and ritual scripture to studies of Naxi family, marriage, and society. It was also during this period that two volumes, *Collection of Studies of Dongba Culture* (1985) and its sequel *Studies of Dongba Culture* (1991), provided an overview of the Naxi studies of the past century in both the West and China, and which pushed Naxi studies into a new era in which increasing numbers of western, Han, and Naxi scholars investigated the social and cultural changes of the Naxi.

Tourism and Naxi Studies

Since the early 1990s, encouraged by the “Open Door Policy” and the “Socialist Modernization” of Chinese state, Lijiang began to embrace tourism as a new

development tool for the local economic growth. Many scholars turned their interests to the rural areas other than the market town of Lijiang where the Naxi culture is viewed as “much assimilated” within Han Chinese culture and “polluted” by tourism development. Most of the books or studies on Lijiang Old Town (particularly by Naxi scholars) that we can find today are mainly about its history and the “past” culture of the people, such as *History of Lijiang Old Town* (Mu 1997), *A Town Named Ink-stone* (He 1999), and *Exploration of Lijiang Old Town and Naxi History* (Zhang¹ 2000). And the most popular Chinese translations of the Western books about Naxi sold in Chinese bookstores are mostly commemorations of Lijiang’s past, such as *Forgotten Kingdom* (Goullart 1955).

Nonetheless, a number of scholars have written about the tourism development and its impacts on many aspects of Naxi culture. The studies in this area of concern, have been lately contributed by Yang Fuquan (2001:215-227), Yang Hui (2000, 2001), Weng Naiqun (2001), Chas McKhann (2001), Heather Peters (2001:313-333) and Zong Xiaolian (forthcoming). But all of these studies seem to concentrate only on the general impact of tourism on Lijiang’s people and culture in the past two decades, and few of them have paid sufficient attention to the increasing impact that arises from Lijiang’s recognition as a “World Heritage” site by the UNESCO in 1997. When Lijiang’s tourism meets “World Heritage”, it offers an opportunity for the Naxi people to interact with more agents involved in Lijiang, and creates a quicker pace for Naxi cultural change. As a result, there is something new and interesting underlying their lifestyle today.

¹ Zhang Wanxing wrote under the penname Fuba.

Obviously, Naxi studies appear to be a transnational discourse. Thus deeper and more specific research on today's Naxi people and their culture within such a world of flux merit more attention by scholars who are concerned with Naxi people and Lijiang's development.

Theoretical Framework

Authenticity

Being a global set of activities crossing many cultures for a long history, tourism is inevitably an important concern of anthropology. And the key themes underpinning anthropology such as comparative framework, holistic approach, and in-depth analysis can be brought to the study of tourism (Burns 1999:72).

The earlier volumes of anthropological study on tourism had a clear focus on tourists in their search for the "why" of tourism. As MacCannell (1976:5) suggests: "by following the tourists, we may be able to arrive at a better understanding of ourselves." Within this search, tourism was viewed as a ritual, a "sacred journey", a pilgrimage, and a way of "nostalgia" (Turner 1978, MacCannell 1976, Graburn 1977, 1983, 1989 and 1995), by which tourists seek to find some special mood of "sacredness".

As Nash suggests (1989:39): "in all such cases the focus of the inquiry ought to be on tourist-host relationships involving transaction between group," the focus on tourist in the earlier studies shifted to the relationships between "self" and "other". *Hosts and Guests* (1977, 1989) edited by Valene Smith stands out as a notable landmark on the subject. For at least two decades, a number of anthropologists and sociologists

were drawn to what tourism meant for the identities of “others”—those peoples in tourist-receiving societies who were more and more becoming tourist objects. Through such studies on the host-guest relationships and their transactions between cultures, the anthropological study of tourism had been in pursuit of the nature of tourism.

The search for the nature of tourism leads to the question of “authenticity”, over which many discussions have been given, such as the “pseudo-event” (Boorstin 1964, MacCannell 1976), “commercialized hospitality” (MacCannell 1976), “hyperreality” (Eco 1986), “staged authenticity” and “commoditization” (Cohen 1988), “authenticity” and “postmodernism” (Urry 1990, Bruner 1994), “consuming nostalgia” (Bruner 1994, Graburn 1995), and so on. Over the past two decades, the issue of authenticity has been identified as a central orienting principle in the study of tourism, as well as to the anthropology of tourism.

The first major use of authenticity in tourism studies is found in the work of MacCannell (1973). Although MacCannell’s work was widely quoted twenty years ago, there were few empirical studies directed towards the interplay of authenticity (tourists’ desire for authenticity) and the idea of “authenticity stages” that he had proposed (Pearce and Moscardo 1986:124). Soon after MacCannell’s landmark publication, Cohen (1979) elaborated his approach of authenticity by adding to it a new emphasis on tourists’ impressions of situations as either real or staged. Many later studies on authenticity considered that short-term touristic encounters are bound to a system of meanings and values that may never go beyond representation; that the tourist “bubble” circumscribes international tourists and that they never go anywhere real or authentic in

their experiences of “the otherness” or “something else”; and that people are able to perceive inauthenticity in tourist settings.

However, many recent researches showed that tourists could achieve authentic experiences through relationships with people in tourist settings, such as Graburn who suggests in *Hosts and Guest* (1989) that tourists could reach nature through people (e.g. cultural or ethnic tourism). In this vein (Graburn 1977, 1983, 1989, Cohen 1984, Eco 1986) as opposed to the idea that the search for authenticity is the key motivating factor for tourists, Urry (1990:11) broadens this discussion with a further comment about the basis for the tourism organization, “one key feature would seem to be that there is a difference between one’s normal place of residence/work and [the tourist experience]...because there is in some sense a contrast with everyday experiences,” by which tourism is viewed as, “a leisure activity which presupposes its opposite, namely regulated and organized work.” That means what the “tourist gaze” is searching for is more than just the “authenticity” of tourist destinations. It could be relaxation, leisure activities, and so on.

Quite recently, Wang (1999) provides a conceptual clarification of the meanings of authenticity in tourist experiences based on an exhaustive review on this subject. After discussing the approaches and the limits of “object-related authenticity” which includes objective authenticity and constructive authenticity, Wang (1999: 349-370) suggests that “existential authenticity is an alternative source in tourism”. That is, what tourists seek are “their own selves and intersubjective authenticity, and the issue of whether the toured objects are authentic is irrelevant or less relevant.” In this regard, the concept of authenticity is been broaden from “object-related” sense to “activity-related”

sense. However, all of these studies on authenticity in tourism have focused particularly on “tourists” rather than “host people” while the latter have been usually viewed as part of “toured object” (Wang 1999).

While the world, viewed as populated by endangered authenticities (of cultures), is continuously globalising, resulting in the commoditization of culture, the issue of authenticity persists, and is still the object of desire for many tourists. Moreover, while various forms of tourism (such as religious tourism, ethnic tourism, eco-tourism, and heritage tourism) might take on and be embraced by the world, authenticity will still signal as a dialect between subject and object, here and there, now and then (Taylor 2001:8). In particular, it should be noted that while tourists are seeking “authenticity”, they act as agents in influencing the receiving peoples’ cultural practices through the host-guest interaction. Therefore, both academic analysis and closer ethnographic investigations are needed in this aspect of tourism studies.

Sustainable Development of Tourism

Based on the ethnographies on tourism, many scholars argue that ethnicity and culture in developing countries have been rapidly commercialized in touristic ways; that is, cultural commoditization. This provides much room for discussions on *representation* and local development. As one of the important topics in anthropology, “representation” has become a focus in the anthropology of tourism. Tan (2001:3) recently summarized,

Representation is the core of tourist promotion. Various agents represent a people’s culture for tourists. The state presents a nationalistic image of diverse cultures living in a unified nation...Tourist agents and guides like to present a romantic picture of the people concerned, stressing primitiveness, loose morals, and feminine beauty where possible. As for the peoples themselves, those involved in promoting their villages may

also play up the “romantic” aspects of their traditions... But if a people is dependent on tourism for their livelihood, the touristy representation of them undoubtedly influences their own representation.

We can see that the inter-communication of these “representations” shapes the relationships of the different agents, clearly beyond just the one between “hosts and guests”. Given Bruner’s argument that “authenticity is a struggle” (1994), we can say it is a struggle in which different representations are contested. This struggle changes the host culture, though necessary not destroying it, because hosts and other agents all participate in the dynamics of the struggle.

If tourism does not destroy culture, does it bring development to the culture of the host society? This question begs a definition of “development”. Not a new topic, development has diverse definitions and measurements varying with different times and emphases, making it still a contentious issue in scholarship. Developing countries take tourism as the key way to develop. In those less-developed countries with “endangered” cultures, how to balance “conservation” and “development” has been the core concern. In most cases, the economy of such societies is mainly dependent on tourism, particularly, cultural or ethnic tourism.

Today, cultural, ethnic, historical, and religious attractions are major destinations but not simply scenic ones any longer. The evident growth in cultural and ethnic tourism heralds an age of increasing impacts and consciousness, “not only about the impacts of tourism on the economy and the biosphere but more about the people and their cultures and societies” (Richards and Hall 2000). Therefore, how to achieve “sustainable” development of tourism is becoming a primary concern for both host governments and academia. In analyzing the tourism of Kuna Yala in Panama, Margaret Swain (1989:101)

in *Host and Guests* argues that “indigenous tourism development will be self-sustaining when the financial, political, economic, and institutional aspects mesh to support ongoing tourism efforts.” The words might suggest that “indigenous tourism” (ethnic tourism) could be a means for sustainable development.

In the pursuit of “sustainable tourism development”, China cannot be overlooked. As a leader among developing countries, China’s rapid economic growth in the past twenty years is clear to all. China has used tourism as a main source of revenue since the Chinese government opened its borders to the outside world in 1978. According to Sofield and Li (1998:362), “the unifying theme throughout China’s long history of tourism is the place of culture and the traditions of heritage tourism and pilgrimage”, and “the complexities of tourism development in contemporary China enclose one era after another and may only be understood by delving back into the past.” In addition, some recent literature contributed by Swain (1995), Lew and Yu (1995), Oakes (1998), Xu (1999), McKhann (2001) and Tan (2001) make it impossible for social scientists to ignore tourism development in China. All these contributions attempt to create a deeper awareness of the local-global relationships forged by tourism, which therefore calls for more and better ethnographical research.

As China actively pursues modernization, “the tensions among a rigid application of socialism, the conservatism of tradition, and the demands of economic development” are apparently concerned (Sofield and Li 1998:362). There are fifty-five “minority nationalities” officially recognized by the state. They make up 8% of the population, totaling about ninety-six million people, but occupy about 65% of China’s land area. The minority groups in many of China’s border areas (such as Yunnan, Tibet,

Guangxi, and Xinjiang) have taken ethnic or cultural resources as an even greater draw than their natural attractions in tourism development. Cultural and ethnic tourism, as a major pathway to improved living standards among the minority peoples, has been used as a way to make money from their heritage. In this vein, Swain (1989, 1993) documented the involvement of the Sani minority of Lunan Yi Autonomous County in tourism from 1949 to the present time. Additionally, research by Oakes (1998) on the Miao minority in Guizhou, southwest China, where ethnic tourism seems to be thriving, demonstrates that the political economy reinforces “selected extractions” of Miao culture for tourism in the “highly contested” process of modernization in China. Notably, while tourism in China has appeared to be an effective tool in lessening to some extent the tensions between the demands and the application of state policy with regard to the “conservation of tradition” of the diverse minorities, and “the economic development” of all groups (Sofield and Li 1998:362-392), there is, nevertheless, a need to explore the nature of these conflicts and the new problems which results from various forms of tourism (i.e. heritage tourism), in both economic and social contexts.

Tourism and Local Politics

The study of tourism in anthropology began with a basic discussion: the consequences of tourism, where power flows within interactions between groups (agents). I would say the most obvious and important display of power lies in the contact of hosts and guests. Nash (1989:47) makes it clear in *Tourism as a Form of Imperialism*:

Since that contact often (but not always) involves representatives of groups differing in degree of productivity and power (the tourist area usually being the less productive and

powerful), investigations focusing on the modernization, urbanization, or development of the metropolitan center ought to be of considerable scientific value.

To Nash (1989:37), the modern tourist, “like the trader, the employer, the conqueror, the governor, the educator, or the missionary, is seen as the agent of contact between cultures and directly or indirectly, the cause of change particularly in the less developed regions of the world.” Following the belief in tourism as a form of imperialism as framed by Nash, there were a number of issues pervasive in the anthropology of tourism which held a negative view of tourism, such as cultural assimilation, acculturation, and cultural drift. These discussions about the nature of modern tourism and its impact upon host societies relied on a basic assumption: commoditization, which results from tourism, is said to destroy the local cultures and human relations. The earlier analysis of authenticity by MacCannell and Cohen had the same implication: the tourist establishment dominates the tourism industry, and by misleading tourists to accept contrived attractions as “authentic”, creates a “false touristic consciousness”. These analyses underlie a note that the host peoples and their cultures are subject to the colossal power of “deception” carried by the modern “tourist gaze” (Urry 1990) within the encounter brought by tourism.

Later, the negative views on tourism appeared to be giving way to more positive views. In the precise criticism of “cultural symbiosis” and “cultural collision”, Wood (1993:66) states, “My complaint was that this treated culture as unitary, passive, and inert”, which counters the simplistic assertions about cultural damage by tourism. Wood further points out:

International tourism neither “destroys” culture nor does it ever simply “preserve” it. It is inevitably bound up in an on-going process of cultural invention in which “Westernization” is probably in most cases of lesser importance than other new directions of cultural change. It has its own peculiar dynamics which make it an interesting and challenging field of study, but tourism’s impact is always played out in an already dynamic and changing cultural context (quoted in Burns 1999:106-107).

In addition, some scholars began to realize the positive aspects by viewing how tourism “recreates” and “revives” original cultures while bringing economic profits (Picard 1995:44-46). More importantly, this trend in tourism studies has made the developing countries (or, non-Western societies) the center of the research attention. In the developing countries, cultures of all types—ethnic, national, regional and the like—are said to be “able to translate their qualities into marketable commodities and spectacles themselves maintained, experienced, and globalized” (Firat 1995:118). It is viewed that “globalization” permeates rapidly with the power flowing from the developed (so-called Western World) to the developing countries (the Third World).

Globalization has been summed up by Anthony Giddens (1990:64) as “the intensification of world-wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.” As for the tourism industry, Burns (1999:129-130) views that, “while the [tourist] company operates on a global basis, insofar as the guest is concerned, they receive ‘customized customer care’ at a specific location.” This means, tourism marketing and products have been and have to be standardized and globalized regardless of locations or local conditions because the global market requires global, non-differentiated products and marketing. This leads to a big problem for tourism: A large part of the attraction of a destination is the expectation that it be unique, special, and exotic. At the same time,

the host culture and people have been enmeshed into the process of globalization by the well-globalized “tourist gaze”. This becomes an on-going argument in the intellectual field on tourism. To those who want to preserve “nobler” indigenous cultures, the changes brought by globalization “provide fuel for criticism” (Tan 2001:17). Even if unaffected by the “tourist gaze”, wouldn’t indigenous cultures be changed by other forces? In this respect, the works of Oakes (1998), Cheung (2001), and Dahles (2001) give a holistic account of the politics of tourism.

Oakes (1998) provides an enlightening analysis based on his ethnographical research on ethnic tourism in Guizhou, China. By examining the Chinese tourist industry as an example of the state’s modernization policies, Oakes views modernity as “a tense and paradoxical process through which people produce, confront, and negotiate a particular kind of socio-cultural change” (1998:7). According to Oakes, a tourist encounter is one in which villagers themselves are working out “authentic” modern subjectivities. That is, local people are actively negotiating their modernity in tourism, as a contested site, with different forces: tourists, the local government, and the national government. By this, the subjectivity of the local people themselves (not just passive agents with resistance to tourism) as a main force to keep tourism working is clearly revealed. Oakes’ work makes another point clear, that is, actors in tourism are more than just hosts and guests. Instead, “the state’s charge of commercializing the rural economy makes tourism one of the most apparent and most desired routes toward this goal for many rural villagers in Guizhou” (1998:222). This underlines the fact that local people are actively negotiating their “modernity” through tourism at the interface of the state’s tourism and ethnic policies.

In speaking of the negotiation between indigenous people and government, Cheung (2001) has the same concern in his research on Ping Shan Heritage Trail of Hong Kong. He sees the Trail as tied to the complicated local politics within the changing socio-political context in contemporary Hong Kong society. Cheung argues, “With the increasing importance of tourism, indigenous villagers can withhold buildings as a strategy during conflicts with the government” (2001:267).

An obvious tendency in literature on the politics of tourism stands out, in which many scholars appear to “underestimate the role of national governments as they believe either in transnational integration or in increasing local autonomy” (Dahles 2001:vii), Dahles’ work on tourism in Java takes the role of national government in local and regional tourism development as the central concern. By looking back on more than twenty-five years of tourism politics and policies under the New Order Government of former President Suharto, Dahles reveals a notable era within which the domestic and international tourism was booming and which became Indonesia’s “first most important economic sector”. Dahles also presents an in-depth analysis of the differentiation and inequalities within the tourism sector and the “multivocality” of stakeholders at a local level, which is viewed as successful in elaborating the issue of the “ethnicizing process” in tourism studies.

The increasing numbers of studies on tourism and local politics, including the ethnography of tourism practices, make a valuable contribution to the understanding of tourism dynamics.

Obviously, the study of tourism is getting increasingly complicated with our rapidly changing world in which all values, cultures, and powers are being shaped.

Therefore, there may be some issues that remain unseen to scholars. In such a state of flux, the study of tourism as a dynamic process should be (re)examined in retrospect in different cultures at different times. In this regard, Lijiang's ethnic tourism is worthy of study. How does ethnic tourism develop in the case of the Naxi culture? Is ethnic tourism a sustainable means to "conserve" the "authentic" (but "fragile") Naxi culture in today's Lijiang? This has led me to research on the ethnic tourism in Lijiang.

Methodology

I carried out my main fieldwork research from mid June to late August 2001. Before that, I had been to Lijiang Old Town several times, and had some experiences of living in local guesthouses. Having worked in Yunnan as a university instructor for two years, I have some friends from Lijiang who frequently talk about Lijiang's development to me. I also know a few local scholars who have been working on Naxi and Dongba religion (the traditional religion of the Naxi) for many years. In particular, my work experience in a foreign NGO, which cooperates with Yunnan and Lijiang local governments as well as UNESCO officials in the concern of Lijiang's conservation and development, made me realize the complexity of the local politics of ethnic and heritage tourism in Lijiang.

Status in the Field

Before I discuss the methodology, I need to talk about my position during fieldwork. My identity to the guesthouse owners of Lijiang was somewhat ambiguous.

I felt very frustrated at the beginning of my fieldwork because many guesthouse owners were hostile to me—the disturbing and inquisitive student. The owners usually refused to talk with me or cooperate on my questionnaire research if I just visited the guesthouses without any intention to stay. For some time, I had tried to identify myself as “closer” to the local owners saying that I was also from Yunnan, but it did not work. “The guesthouse owners are snobbish now. They will be more cooperative only if they think you can bring them some benefit... like a reporter, or a tourism developer,” advised by my assistant, a 20-year-old Naxi woman who grew up in Lijiang. After that, except for those guesthouses where I could stay for some days and conduct participant observation, I introduced myself as an independent “interviewer” when talking with the local owners and asking them to help with the questionnaires. By doing this, unexpectedly, it became much easier for me to obtain useful information from the owners. They seemed more willing to talk to me as an independent interviewer than as a “no-good student”. A 73-year-old guesthouse owner said to me,

Guniang, you should help us to promote the Naxi guesthouses to Hong Kong and other countries. We all should try the best to ‘make a sound’ (*daxiangmingsheng*: 打响名声) for Naxi traditional houses, the most important heritage in Lijiang. Some reporters working for *Today’s Topic* of Yunnan Television Station and some for *Eastern Time and Space* of CCTV have been to my guesthouse last year. They said the chance of living in the traditional Naxi houses like this is very hard to come by for today’s urban people.

I promised the old Naxi that I would do my best to promote the Naxi guesthouses to my friends and the outside world, which made the owner very happy, and he talked with me for about two hours that afternoon. This led me to ruminate about why the owners preferred talking to a “reporter” and what “benefit” they could get from a reporter. At the beginning, I thought that the local owners might have an expectation that reporters

would make their guesthouses well known among the tourists because of the reports they would write, which would bring more guests (of course more money) to the owners.

Auntie He, one of my key informants, ran a guesthouse in a marginal district of the Old Town. She often helped introduce me to other guesthouse owners when I stayed in her house. When she introduced me to her friends, her introduction was always like this: “Hi, Lao Zhang, this is my niece’s friend from Hong Kong, doing a tourism project in Lijiang. She wants to interview some of our indigenous Naxi guesthouse owners, and I told her about your house...” With a flattering and patronizing tone, her introduction worked very well, and I was able to interview many local guesthouse owners. Once I couldn’t help asking her why she would tell others that I was from Hong Kong rather than Yunnan, and whether that meant they think I could bring guests to their guesthouses. —“It’s not that easy,” Auntie He answered,

If you tell them you are from Kunming or other places in Yunnan, nobody pays any attention to you. You know, in China the “personal connection (*renji guanxi*: 人际关系)” is very complicated; the local people don’t want to get in trouble by saying something bad about the local government to an “insider”, who might have some connections with the government. On the other hand, they hope that the “outsiders” can help them to get more attention from the outside world; and of course, can also help them to promote their guesthouses widely. So I need to emphasize you are from “Hong Kong”, and ready to listen to our local common people’s views seriously. Besides, I didn’t tell lie. You come from Hong Kong, and want to listen to what they think, don’t you?

However, for the questionnaires distributed to fifty guesthouse owners, only twenty-eight of them were completed. I could only guess that many of them were not willing to say what they really thought in a written questionnaire, which looked politically “formal” to the common people. In fact, local Lijiang people welcome the reporters and the media. They actually expect western reporters or interviewers to come to seek out

and report the “truth” from them. Being “a Hong Kong researcher doing interviews”, I could keep my fieldwork going well in Lijiang.

Participant Observation

During the fieldwork, I lived with seven different Naxi families who offered homestay to tourists in Lijiang Old Town. Speaking fluent Yunnan Han dialect allowed me to communicate well with the local people who speak both Yunnan Mandarin and Naxi. Apart from walking around in the Old Town every day and talking to the tourists in the local restaurants and cafés, I usually talked with, or, formally interviewed the host family when most of the guests were out in the daytime. Usually, the hosts liked to talk about changes in the town, their businesses, their families, the migrants, and the government policies. These conversations often took place when I helped them do some housekeeping work or when they were free. Some of the hosts became key informants for my research, who told me a lot of stories about the “power relations” (in their eyes) in Lijiang. They also introduced some other important informants to me to interview. In the evenings, the guests returned and they liked to get together in the courtyard to chat. I often joined them to get some information about their experiences, impressions, and comments. Where possible, serious interviews were conducted. Living in the guesthouses allowed me to observe how the local hosts (and their families) live their everyday lives, how their lives are influenced by the different actors in the town, and how they themselves interpret such influences.

Interviews and Questionnaires

During my fieldwork, tape-recorded individual interviews were conducted with twelve guesthouse owners, two migrant owners, two officials of the local government, and two local key informants. I did not conduct formal and tape-recorded interviews with most of the guests because they did not feel comfortable being tape-recorded. I also did some informal interviews with the tourists in the western restaurants and cafés in the town where many foreign guests frequented.

At the same time, three sets of questionnaires numbering 360 copies were devised and distributed to guesthouse owners, domestic guests, and foreign guests. I sent them to the guesthouses, some restaurants and western cafés. 190 of the questionnaires were completed and returned. The questionnaire helped me to get more data that I could not obtain from personal interviews and government documents, especially comments from international guests and guesthouse owners whom I did not have a chance to talk with. Besides, through questionnaires, I was able to get some information that the informants declined to give in interviews.

Supplementary Methodologies

Obviously, I did encounter some difficulties while doing fieldwork. I do not speak Naxi, but some old Naxi people speak Naxi only. So from time to time, I needed assistance in translation. Besides, it is not easy to count the latest number of guesthouses in the town while sending and collecting questionnaires, which is pretty time-consuming. Thus, I employed a Naxi woman as an assistant for my fieldwork. This saved much time and made it easier for me to reach the local people.

Internet has become a very convenient and efficient technology nowadays for collecting information. Indeed, I found many websites concerning Lijiang's tourism, where tourists and even local people provide their comments, suggestions and experiences on-line. Thus, it is interesting to see how Lijiang tourism becomes such a "global" concern. More importantly, since tourism is a seasonal phenomenon, some of the information on the web cannot be accessed directly during the limited time in the field. The web helped me to be informed about Lijiang's tourism even when I was physically away from Lijiang after the fieldwork.

Additionally, I frequently contacted my Naxi friends and some local scholars to consult them about many issues during and after the fieldwork. By personal communicating with them, I got to know beforehand who would be important to talk to and which family had more stories. In the field, I met some researchers who were also interested in tourism development of Lijiang. We often exchanged ideas and views on the subject. This has led me to think more about the impact from scholarship on the local community. I maintain continuous contact through emails with these friends, local scholars, and my assistant. They keep me informed about changes in Lijiang Old Town, especially the changes involving the homestay guesthouses.

Organization of the Thesis

Based on a review of previous studies that are related to my research, this introductory chapter has stated clearly the research scope, questions, objectives, and methodology of this project. Chapter 2 describes my field site. It will provide the

cultural, societal, and economic history of Lijiang as background to my study of the homestay tourism in Lijiang Old Town. Together with a brief introduction of tourism development and its impacts on the local community, this chapter attempts to give an overview of today's Lijiang and its Naxi people which underpins the significance of this research.

The third chapter describes how the local guesthouse owners negotiate their “authentic Naxi culture” with some agents within homestay tourism. In this encounter forged particularly by homestay tourism, I will demonstrate how the Naxi people actively use their local knowledge and adopt strategies to cope with the tourists, the local government, the local hotels and the migrants. Through this discussion, we can see a struggle in which the Naxi locals are subjectively (re)constructing their ‘authentic’ culture in their pursuit of economic growth. In Chapter 4, I will first discuss how the discourses of world heritage and heritage conservation influence the Naxis’ lives in today’s Lijiang. The recognition of “World Cultural Heritage” has put the local people in a more intense struggle for economic survival, in which the globalized “heritage” concept, particularly as legitimized by the UNESCO and the academic authorities, is (re)interpreted by the local people. It has also lent considerable power to the local people to (re)construct their “authentic” past (heritage). In this concern, I will particularly discuss UNESCO, scholars and professionals as agents in helping the local Naxi to reconstruct their heritage. From “homestay tourism” to “World Heritage”, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 will investigate diverse interactions and conflicts between these local and global agents who are involved in the Naxi’s daily life in Lijiang. And there

lies the theme that the “authenticity” of Naxi culture finds no roots anywhere as it is shaped by the local-global reconstructions.

Based on this, Chapter 5 is about the nature of “authenticity”. By examining three key issues in Lijiang’s homestay tourism: ethnicity, home, and heritage, I will explore the understandings of “Naxi’s authenticity” at different levels as held by tourists, the state, and the global agencies, and discuss how the Naxi people bring these different-level of understandings into their daily practices. At this point, rethinking of the nature of “heritage” as well as “World Heritage” will be discussed. The final chapter is the conclusion that summarizes the main points of the whole thesis. It also tries to illustrate the awareness of the increasing complexity of ethnic tourism in Lijiang as more and more agents and discourses become involved.

Chapter 2

Background to Tourism Development in Lijiang

There are 280,000 Naxi people distributed mainly in such provinces as Yunnan, Sichuan, and Tibet. About 70% of the Naxi people inhabit in Lijiang Naxi Autonomous County, which is located in the northwest corner of Yunnan Province that links Qinghai Tibetan plateau with Yunnan-Guizhou plateau. Among twelve ethnic groups living in Lijiang County, the Naxi inhabitants numbering 202,000 are the majority people, being 58% of the total population of the county (Lijiang Almanac 2000:336). As is generally perceived, what makes this group different from other nationalities has been attributed to the Naxi's Dongba religion, their matrilineal family system, and their distinctive housing architecture.

Naxi Culture and Dongba Religion

Although the Lijiang Region has been inhabited since Paleolithic times, the town of Lijiang did not emerge until the thirteenth century when the Mu's kingdom, which was in control of the region, decided to transfer its capital to the site (He 2000). The Old Town of Lijiang, also called Dayan Town, was first established up in the Song Dynasty, and it has a history of almost a thousand years. For the latter period of the Yuan Dynasty (1280-1368) and the whole of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1677), the House of the Mu, a minority hereditary headman appointed by the central authorities, had governed the Lijiang region. Hereditary chieftains sent tax and tribute to the Ming court. The Ming

governments, in turn, relied on the Mu family as the mainstay for the control of the people of various ethnic groups in northwestern Yunnan Province. However, in the first year of the Yongzheng era (1723) of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), the hereditary headmen government was replaced by Qing court officials. The hereditary chieftain surnamed Mu thus became the local administrator. This historic event is called “*gaitu guiliu*”(改土归流): from hereditary chieftain to court government (Guo and Li 1999).

The Naxi are a Tibeto-Burman-speaking ethnic minority. It is said that the Naxi is immediately recognizable as their faces are rather oblong-shaped and their skin is tanned, weathered from the extremes of temperature experienced at an altitude of 3,000 meters. The Naxi are descendants of ancient Qiang that migrated south from the Qinghai plateau, settled in Sichuan and Yunnan and gave rise to the several Tibeto-Burman speaking peoples of the region. Naxi people have mostly embraced Tibetan Buddhism but they also believe in various spirits and demons. In particular, they have Dongba Religion that is deeply influenced by Buddhism and Taoism. Its religious specialist, *dongba* (a Naxi term means “the intelligent”), is a combination of shaman, doctor, scholar, artisan and craftsman and an important successor of the traditional culture. Naxi people believed that sickness and disasters were caused by bad spirits and only the *dongbas* could try to placate or chase away the bad spirits. In some other Naxi areas, *dongba* is also called as “daba” or “dabo” (Guo and He 1994). In the eighth century, the Naxi invented a pictorial script that they used to describe their history, religion and customs. This may be called the “Dongba script” (东巴经). There are over 1,500 kinds and over 20,000 volumes of the Dongba scripts, which are collected in the libraries and museums of Lijiang, Kunming, Nanjing, Beijing and Taiwan as well as in other

countries such as the United States, Britain, Germany, and France (Jackson 1989). The Dongba scripts containing from philosophy, history, religion, folklore to medicine, astronomy, literature, and art, is a real encyclopedia of traditional Naxi culture. It has been described as the unique “living pictograph” that is completely preserved in the world (Guo 1994).

For nearly a thousand years before the early 1950s, *dongbas* had played very important roles in Lijiang, and “Dongba culture” named after Dongba religion has been referred as the core of Naxi culture. This has contributed considerably to Lijiang’s worldwide fame as well as its tourism development in the recent decades. In Naxi ethnic-tourism expansion of today’s Lijiang, “Dongba culture” has become a big attraction by standing for the “ancient”, “exotic” and “unique” Naxi culture. It has also contributed a lot in spreading the fame of Lijiang throughout the world.

Naxi’s Family and House

As mentioned in many historical books on Lijiang, the Naxi worshiped the forces of nature, such as water, thunder, the sun, the moon, fire, and so on, but their principal religious concern was about “woman’s fertility” and “populous family” (人丁兴旺). The Naxi was once a matrilineal society. Family names and possessions went to the daughters. Some local people told me during my fieldwork that, in the past, the Naxi’s children knew their mother but not their father who could be any of the several lovers that women had. The masculine role model was provided by the maternal uncle. A man would spend the night with a woman but would return to his mother’s house in the morning where he lived most of time. But later, the Naxi and other matrilineal

societies were subjected to intense pressure during the period of *gaitu guiliu* when the Qing government set out to impose rules of social behavior compatible with Confucian values. Naxi literature and Dongba script vividly describes the waves of “suicides for love” provoked by the imposition of the Confucian ideal and arranged marriages by the Han-influenced parents. Since then, the overwhelming majority of the Naxi (except Moso people) have practiced monogamous marriage and practiced patrilineal system, as the Han Chinese do. Consequently, Naxi women now have lower status than the men within family though it is still the women (wives) who are in charge of the family finance.

For a long history, Naxi women have been doing most of the housework and farming work while the men take it easy. Women wear an under vest, a loose blouse, rough trousers, a large blue apron; and on their back, a characteristic sheepskin carrying pad on which are woven round designs that symbolize their hardworking and diligence—“to start working as early in the morning as stars can be seen in the sky and do not stop until as late in the evening as the moon appears (*pixing daiyue*: 披星戴月).” This is still visible today on the streets of Lijiang as the Naxi women attend to daily chores and activities. In a Naxi family, generally, daughters marry out and sons set up separate households from their parents after getting married, but the youngest son stays in the same house with the parents after marriage and provides for their elderly parents. To the Naxi people, one who has both parents and children within family is viewed as “having good fortune” (*you fuqi*: 有福气). Naxi people give great honor to big families that have three or four generations living together.

Apart from Naxi's families, the traditional dwellings and settlements in Lijiang are also regarded as part of the intangible cultural heritage, reflecting social structure of the Naxi society. The distinct architecture of the traditional houses is another attraction to tourists. According to recent archeological findings, Naxi's popular wooden-framed and roof-tiled houses originated in the Tang Dynasty. Later in Ming and Qing times, this construction style as represented by Lijiang Old Town had been fully developed (Overview on Naxi Culture 1999:631). As Peters (2001:318) describes:

The architecture miraculously remained intact despite the years of political turmoil and change that have marked China's political history since 1949. The traditional courtyard house structure, which is influenced by both Han and Bai (a sinicized ethnic group living in the Dali region) architectural styles, was and is still decorated with intricately carved windows, doors, and balustrades.

Apart from the stereotyped view of "every household having courtyards and planting flowers", the different location of the rooms inside any Naxi house has special but fixed meanings. According to MaKhann (1989:157), "the construction of space in Naxi house architecture shows the extent to which the Naxi see in their houses a microcosm of the cosmic and social forces that order their world." But this is only time of the earlier and traditional house construction. MaKhann (1989:157-158) points out its cultural symbolism as follows:

People living in the populous southern districts have had a longer and more intense history of contact with mainstream Chinese culture, and now use a design of Han origin. Some of the meanings encoded in traditional house architecture continue to find expression in the acculturation of the Han design, while others have been lost, as the cultural forms and social processes from which they derive are themselves being transformed in the face of an increasingly present national culture.

As a popular place of the county for many centuries, Lijiang Old Town has been quite acculturated by Han culture in its house construction, of both the external features and the internal decor. However, there are still some special features that could be found in the present Naxi houses in the town. These features express complex relationships in the Naxi's conceptions about cosmology, kinship and gender. For sure, the well-preserved house architecture in Lijiang today (even though it is similar to the traditional Han's) has given rise to thousands of Chinese tourists coming to Lijiang for a sense of "nostalgia". In the boom of Lijiang's tourism of recent years, "bridges, brooks, and houses" (*xiaoqiao, liushui, renjia*: 小桥流水人家) have been three key attractions of Lijiang Old Town to tourists. In particular, Naxi houses have become not only important sites where hosts meet guests; they are also "world heritage" after Lijiang's recognition by UNESCO in 1997. It is a contested site where many different social actors are involved.

Economy in Lijiang

Before the early 1950s, the Naxi have a mixed economy of agriculture, pastoralism with some trading (Jackson 1989:133). Early in the Qing Dynasty when *gaitu guiliu* was practiced, feudal landlord economy had replaced feudal headman economy in Lijiang area. Later, with the fast development of commodity economy in Han and Bai ethnic areas nearby, the handicraft economy became independent from agriculture. Afterward, capitalist commerce and industries was pushed forward in Lijiang, centered in the Lijiang Old Town.

Lijiang had been a strategical main gateway between Yunnan and its northern neighbor Tibet as well as southern Asian countries. Contrasting to the well-known Silk Road by camels in North China, Lijiang was once a key transit station on the “Tea Road” by horses in South China, usually called “the Ancient Road of Horses and Tea” (*chama gudao*: 茶马古道). With the development of the Tea Road, Lijiang had served as a trading center and transit market for various trade horse-groups from different regions and countries. Since the late Qing Dynasty, Lijiang Old Town had become the biggest commercial town of the Naxi areas (Overview on Naxi Culture 1999:713). Meanwhile, the prosperity of the Tea Road immensely promoted cross-cultural communication between the different ethnic groups of the area. During the War of Resistance Against Japan in the 1930s and the 1940s, foreign trade in China’s southeastern coastal area came to a standstill and transport between China and Burma (the present Myanmar) was blockaded by Japan. This resulted in an unprecedented boosting of Sino-Indian trade, and Lijiang became a trading center for India, Tibet and China’s interior.

In addition, during the War of Resistance Against Japan, the number of local private enterprises in Lijiang was up to 1200, and some millionaire entrepreneurs began to appear (Lijiang Culture Assembly 2000:128). Lijiang County had a more developed handicraft industry than the other Naxi areas where landlord economy predominated. More than eighty percent of the Naxi people in Lijiang at that time were engaged in trading and producing handicrafts, which reached its heyday in late Qing Dynasty and the era of the Republic of China (1912-1949), by covering mining, carpentry, fur and leather dealing, wood carving, liquor fermentation, shoemaking, papermaking, textiles,

dyeing and tailoring, and so on. Copper articles and leather products were particularly famous in Lijiang. During the era of the Republic of China, with the development of commercial business in Lijiang, horse-group transportation, horse inn, and grocery business had been flourishing too.

This prosperous trading scene of Lijiang is depicted in *Forgotten Kingdom* (1955) by Peter Goullart, a White Russian who had worked in Lijiang for ten years in the 1940s as a representative of the Chinese Industrial Cooperatives (INDUSCO). The thriving trading activities in Lijiang at the time gave rise to the growth of restaurants and “travel-horse inn” (*lumadian*: 旅马店) of the area in catering to hundreds of trading groups (most of them from Tibet) using horses to come to Lijiang each year. There were 17 travel-horse inns in Lijiang Old Town in the Republic of China (Lijiang Naxi Autonomous County Almanac 2001:412). To a great extent, “travel-horse inns” in Lijiang had promoted the economic and cultural exchanges between Naxi and Tibet as well as other ethnic groups in the area. After the Sino-Japanese War, the commercial environment got worse. This together with the various heavy taxations on businessmen caused hundreds of private entrepreneurs of the area to go bankrupt. Lijiang’s thriving in trading and marketing came to an end in the later years before 1949. After Lijiang’s liberation, the Old Town became a center for herb-medicine production, papermaking, cement making, mechanical industry, transportation, logging, and food processing, etc. Since the late 1970s’ economic reforms in China, Lijiang’s trading and handicraft industry has re-emerged.

Tourism Development in Lijiang

In the beginning of the last century, Lijiang's scenic beauty and the extraordinary Naxi culture had been widely introduced to western countries by a famous figure, Joseph F. C. Rock, an Austrian-born American who had spent his best part of life in Lijiang for three decades from the 1920s to the 1950s. Rock mastered the Naxi language, translated more than 100 copies of Dongba scripture, and wrote as well as edited many books on the Naxi ethnic group. The fact that the Naxi, have now become a worldwide (particularly western) exploration site for both tourists and scholars owes much to Rock.

After 1949, Lijiang was closed to the outside world as was the rest of China for about thirty years. That began to change in 1989, when the Central Government in Beijing decided that Yunnan should exploit its tourism potential. Foreign tourists started to pour in to Lijiang after the opening of an airport near the town in 1994, and a newly built highway to Kunming (the capital city of Yunnan Province) allows that the county can be reached by bus in less than ten hours. Virtually non-existent before the mid-1980s, tourism has replaced Lijiang's logging economy of recent decades as the major industry (McKhann 2001:1). In terms of tourism, Lijiang County is quite rich in natural resources. There are Jade Dragon Snow-mountain, The First Bend of Yangzi River, Tiger Leaping Gorge, and Dayan Town (normally known as "Lijiang Old Town"). These are big attractions to tourists and they are used to promote the rapid development of tourism in Lijiang County. Due to such natural beauty, Lijiang becomes the model for

the Western fantasy of “Shangri-La”² as narrated in James Hilton’s famous novel, *Lost Horizon* (1933). In fact, the cultural resource in Lijiang is an even greater draw than its natural attractions. Its long history of more than 800 years and distinctive Naxi culture share the exceptional contribution to Lijiang’s tourism development. Lijiang, claimed as the “living fossil of Dongba Culture”, has embraced the thriving tourism industry since the early 1990s and become a full-fledged tourist attraction in China today.

The effusion of tourism has been fully manifested in Lijiang Old Town (*Dayan zhen*: 大研镇). Lijiang Old Town is famous in China for its old and simple architectural style as well as the elegant art in the layout of the town. In the town the Yuquan River (玉泉河) winds in three canals traversing the town. The local residents’ dependency on and use of natural rivers within the settlement is a distinctive feature of Lijiang Old Town. Until very recently, these rivers still functioned in their traditional role, and middle-aged residents remember drinking water from these rivers when they were children. Whatever street and whatever lane you walk on in Lijiang, there is a small stream with small bridges across it here and there. As a saying has it: A house beside a stream with a small bridge across it makes a wonderful scene that you can only find in *Dayan* (namely, Lijiang Old Town). Owing to this, Lijiang has been called “Southern Water City” (*nanguo shuixiang*: 南国水乡) for centuries.

The town covers 3.8 square kilometers and comprises about 6,000 households, about 25,000 local people. It is quite different from the other ancient towns in China in that there is no town wall around Lijiang Old Town. According to the local legend, the

² An imaginary distant beautiful place, where everything is pleasant (Cambridge International Dictionary).

governor Mu (木³) believed that building town walls meant surrounding the character Mu with a square frame, that is, the character Kun (困⁴). So the headman Mu avoided building walls around the town, lest enemy surrounded his town. The center of the Old Town, locally known as *sifangjie* (四方街), is the largest square of the town, which has served as a commercial hub, and now the center of the peddlers selling various souvenirs to tourists.

With these physical features and traditional lifestyle of the Naxi as well as their remarkable Dongba culture, Lijiang was recognized as a unique and precious historical place and it came under the state protection in 1986. Since late 1996, the Lijiang government had made great efforts in many “clean-up” and rebuilding projects to pave way to the UNESCO’s inscription as World Cultural Heritage Site. On December 4, 1997, Lijiang was declared a “World Heritage Site” by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), despite a devastating earthquake in 1996 that caused considerable damage to both the new and old towns. The consultant for the UNESCO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Heather Peters (2001:319) states, “...Lijiang Old Town was inscribed on UNESCO’s prestigious World Heritage List. The general consensus among all parties was that this inscription would guarantee the preservation and protection of this important historic and cultural site.”

This recognition brings about faster tourism development in Lijiang. In fact, tourism development is strongly encouraged by the local government after Lijiang’s inscription in UNESCO’s “World Heritage List”. The number of tourists climbed from

³ It means “wood”.

⁴ It means “being surrounded”.

200,000 in 1992 to 3.1 million (15 times of the former) in 1999. Tourist revenues grew from 16 million to roughly 1.3 billion RMB (McKhann 2001:1). As McKhann (2001:15) describes, “A scant fifty years ago, Lijiang was a fifteen day walk from Kunming, and two months from Lhasa. Elderly Lijiangers all remember when the best connection they had to the ‘outside world’ was a mule laden with tea. Now one can walk into any of a half dozen Internet cafés in the Old Town and get online in less than it takes to make a pot of tea...”

Tourism-related Impacts on Lijiang Old Town

Today it is impossible to talk about Lijiang’s development without addressing the impacts from tourism on all aspects of their life. If you step into Lijiang Old Town now, your first impression must be: What a commercialized town! —Stores, restaurants, cafés, peddlers, guesthouses, and tourists (of course!) are all in sight.

Most of commercial brands and signs are written in Dongba script, plenty of wooden and bamboo plates for decoration are carved with Dongba pictograph, and all kinds of paintings, books, scriptures, clothes, and artifacts are presented with the theme of “Dongba culture”. However, this does not indicate the thriving of “Dongba culture” as it appears at first glance. In another word, it is just the commoditization of culture. Most of the producers or salesmen do not have any idea about what they have been copying or tracing from Dongba scriptures. Even if some young people have known a little Dongba writing or painting, they often pretend to be “specialists” on the Dongba culture such as to sell more of their paintings and designs to tourists. In fact, there are only two *dongbas* (the priests) in Lijiang and both of them are in their eighties with poor

health. Thus, to many scholars, the seemingly “thriving Dongba culture” is little than the commoditization of a dying culture. As Weng (2001:7) has pointed out, “In Lijiang, Naxi culture, both tangible and intangible, including Dongba scripts, Dongba rituals, Naxi dances, village life, Naxi costume and Naxi food, has been widely commodified since the mid 1990s.”

Given that Lijiang Old Town is well known as “the living Old Town” in the world today, we need to ask, how can we identify whether a town is “living” or not? Obviously, it depends on whether there are native Naxi people with their culture living in the town. However, the reality in Lijiang Old Town is quite harsh. The rapid increase in the volume of tourists to Lijiang has caused both the exodus of local residents and the influx of outsiders. Since the early 1990s, local people began to move out of the Old Town, as Peters (2001:322) describes,

[The local people] renting their houses to outside entrepreneurs coming from Kunming, Dali, and other provinces, such as Sichuan and Fujian...In the process, the face of Lijiang also changed: many shops sold standardized, cheap Chinese tourism products rather than local products, and restaurants sold Sichuan or Kunming food.

A random survey of souvenir shops and cafés carried by the local government in 1999 reveals that, few of them are owned and managed by Lijiang indigenous people. Weng (2001:5) shows the same concern,

Many businessmen came from other parts of China and local ones have been tempted by earning fast money in such booming tourist market. Souvenirs, marked deceptively as Naxi culture and actually produced from outside Lijiang, flooded the stores and booths around the tourist spots in Lijiang. As a result, complaints about the migrants’ influx to Lijiang have increased from tourists, local residents, officials, and scholars. “Our local culture, customs and the spirit of Lijiang are now seriously at risk

from too many tourists suddenly coming here. We welcome visitors, but not so many. People will soon stop coming if we lose our unique character,” said He Duanqi, the governor of Lijiang Prefecture. Also, as one UNESCO official who had recently worked in Lijiang warns, “Not only did it [the migration] reduce even further the individuality, uniqueness, and authenticity of Lijiang’s shops, but it also changed the spirit of the town” (personal communication, July 2001).

In today’s Lijiang, the growth of tourists and the increase of migrants have intensified the commoditization of Naxi culture; more importantly, Naxi inhabitants’ lifestyle has also been changed at different levels. First, the tourists and migrants have polluted the inner rivers by throwing or dumping garbage into it so that the water of the rivers can no longer be used for drinking. Second, fewer local children can speak the Naxi language, and most of Naxi grandparents have to communicate with their grandchildren in Han language (Yunnan dialect). Many old locals were worrying that in the end, the unique Naxi language, like the rest of their culture, could become mere pictures in exhibition halls which were understood by nobody. Third, only those women older than fifty years old wear Naxi traditional clothes while very few young women do. We may find some young Naxi women wearing some sort of modified Naxi costume in Lijiang, but only when it is needed for the sake of tourists, such as talking the roles of tour guides, waitresses, salesgirls, and the like. Once an old Naxi woman told me, “They (young Naxi women) wear something ridiculous (*bulun bulei*: 不伦不类)! It is not Naxi at all, nor is it modern. You know, they only wear that at work for money!” Additionally, the overuse of public toilet and water drainage system in the Old Town has also reached crisis proportions.

Increasing concern about these tourism-related problems in Lijiang has shown in some world-famous newspapers. British *Independence* (23 June 1994) reported that, with the last of the *dongbas* in danger of fading away, the Dongba culture would probably disappear from the earth soon. *New York Times* (5 January 2000), in the article “Naxi: A Dying Culture as Seen Through Aging Eyes” also stated that, “...economic change and the inescapable influence of China’s majority culture [Han Chinese] have all helped doom the Dongba tradition.”

Is Naxi culture really “dying” in Lijiang? How do the local people conceive their own culture that is so much influenced by tourism? Is there any way to “preserve” the Naxi culture and keep it “living”? If yes, how? This has become a big challenge to the local government and UNESCO.

Homestay Guesthouses in Lijiang Old Town

According to *Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary*, “homestay” is defined as “a period during which a visitor in a foreign country lives with a local family.” The term, ‘homestay tourism,’ which I use throughout my thesis, is a form of tourism, which involves the cultural interaction of tourists and guests in a “homestay” situation. It is form of ethnic tourism.

In Chinese, *binguan* (宾馆) and *kezhan* (客栈) share the same English translation as “guesthouse” though they are differentiated from each other. The term *binguan*, widely used after 1949, is normally state-owned while *kezhan* is private-owned and normally referring to the old inns in ancient times. The “guesthouse” adopted in my

research indicates *minju kezhan*, namely, “homestay guesthouse”. This is very similar to the well known Japanese version called *minshuku* (民宿居).

“Homestay guesthouse” (*minju kezhan*: 民居客栈) in its present sense began to appear in Lijiang Old Town since early 1990. It experienced its growth peak around 1999 when the International Horticultural Exposition was held in Kunming. Notably, homestay guesthouse has become the only business operated mostly by the native Naxi in the area. According to the report of Lijiang County Tourism Bureau, the number of the “homestay guesthouses” did reach the highest record of 129 in the town around 1999, not considering the increasing number of government-owned hotels and guesthouses. However, the number of the private guesthouses is apt to change easily due to their flexibility and small scale. From my fieldwork data, there were about 70 private homestay guesthouses by August 2001 in Lijiang Old Town. Such a concentration of homestay guesthouse within such a small settlement is another distinctive feature of Lijiang Old Town. The rapid increase of homestay guesthouse in Lijiang Old Town makes it an important issue in the agenda of discussion on Lijiang’s ethnic tourism and its local development.

Unlike other shops, bars, or restaurants in the Old Town, the homestay guesthouses are mostly owned and managed by the local Naxi, who are the crucial carrier of the distinct ethnic lifestyle. This is the key premise to keep this “World Cultural Heritage Site” as a “living old town” which both UNESCO and the local government have hoped. While the concerns on the negative impacts of tourism are increasingly coming from different parties, the emergence of “homestay” business in Lijiang Old Town seems to offer a possible solution: to preserve the “Living Dongba culture” of the Naxi, and to

preserve the “authenticity” of the Old Town as “World Heritage”. In the following chapters, I will examine the local practices within homestay tourism of Lijiang Old Town in the late 1990s, as well as the related public discourses such as “authenticity”, “World Heritage” and “heritage conservation”.

Chapter 3

Encounter with Homestay Tourism

The appearance of homestay guesthouses in Lijiang seems to symbolize the “ancient”, “exotic” and “unique” Naxi culture that is still “living”. More than economic growth, homestay tourism also brings various conflicts to the local people, particularly the local guesthouse owners. In the encounter forged by homestay tourism, this chapter demonstrates how the Naxi people actively use local knowledge and adopt strategies to cope with the guests, the local government, local hotels and migrants. We shall see the struggle in which the Naxi locals are subjectively negotiating their “authentic Naxi culture” to pursue the economic growth.

Hosts and Guests

Flush Toilet and “Naxi authenticity”

“Would you like to choose a guesthouse to stay, *guniang*?”¹ asked a middle-aged woman cutting in my way when I was walking to the Old Town from the bus station, with a big bag on my back. “My guesthouse is in the Old Town, typical Naxi style, cheap and very clean, with a television set in the room, and hot-water shower is available 24 hours. We also have single rooms, only 5-minute walk from here...” Before I could say a word, she began to introduce her house enthusiastically. Although the way

¹ *guniang*: Yunnan dialect polite address to a young woman or a girl.

of her “sales-promotion” made me feel uncomfortable, I was too tired to walk longer to find another guesthouse on this warm summer night; so I agreed to follow this woman to her guesthouse, which was opened on the first day of my fieldwork in Lijiang Old Town.

It was not until the next morning that I found that this guesthouse, with five guestrooms and 11 beds in all, was fully occupied. By the courtyard door was a tiny and dark room for the owner’s whole family: the woman, her husband and their 16-year-old daughter. This woman managed the guesthouse business. Her husband, Mr. Yang, had his own job in the new town, so he could not help her at the guesthouse except chatting with the guests in the evening. Two days after, I found a problem: we 14 people in this guesthouse had to share the only toilet there, which caused a “toilet jam” every morning.

When some of the guests complained about this, Mr. Yang said,

We cannot build more (toilets) since there are some strict regulations of the government on building flush toilet in the Old Town. The town is “World Heritage”, and too much concrete construction of flush toilet will destroy the traditional look of the town. We residents should help preserve Naxi tradition and the heritage... Some other guesthouses do have more toilets, but that destroys the heritage. They look like hotels, not authentic Naxi houses.

When I was checking out this guesthouse, the woman gave me a well-designed business card, on which was written the guesthouse’s name: JS Guesthouse, which literally means “accumulating-benevolence guesthouse”. “It’s a pleasant name,” I said. “Well, we Naxi people emphasize doing good deals and helping others with honesty, not just for money but for accumulating benevolence in our lives. Please recommend my guesthouse to your friends who want to travel to Lijiang. I won’t overcharge even a bit. If you come again, I will give you 20 percent discount for the rent.”

After that, I moved to another guesthouse, and the toilet was also a problem. The owner, Mr. Zhou, was a retired middle school teacher. Knowing that I was doing research on homestay tourism in the Old Town, Mr. Zhou frequently talked to me about his “experienced” view on different kinds of tourists:

Having been doing this business (guesthouse) for three years, I can tell skillfully who is of “high quality” (*suzhi gao*: 素质高) and who is not. As for those who are of “low quality” (*suzhi di*: 素质低), they are picky and only seeking the “modern” but trivial stuffs such as flush toilet, television set, etc. But the high-quality ones know what are the “authentic” (*zhengzongde*: 正宗的) Naxi practices, and they know more about the importance of preserving the Naxi’s culture and heritage. For example, those experts and foreign guests would not complain about the fatuous problem like the shortage of flush toilet in the guesthouses.

In the Old Town, there were a small number of guesthouses that had private flush toilet in the guestroom, which had become a marker of “standard room”, and it usually charged twice as much of a common guestroom that normally costed RMB 20 to RMB 25 per bed per night. Later, I lived in a bigger and well-rebuilt guesthouse (I would call it a “hotel”) named “Naxi-family Inn”. The owner was a young Naxi man called Xiao He. He employed two young women as housekeepers. There were two “standard rooms” in his house, which Xiao He was pretty proud of. When I asked him if the “standard rooms” would make his “Naxi-family Inn” not that “authentic”, he shook his head and said without any hesitation,

Oh, no, it definitely won’t. I don’t think the Naxi culture is only confined to the outward appearance. It is also about the real life of our Naxi guesthouse owners and how we treat guests. The Naxi are an open-minded ethnic group, good at learning good things from other groups to advancement themselves. This has enabled this minority and its culture to be still alive today. Flush toilet is a good thing for guests and for ourselves, and how can it destroy the historic Old Town? Moreover, the guesthouse is for homestay; of course we should make guests feel as comfortable as at home. I dare to say that every guesthouse owner wants to build more toilets in their houses unless they don’t have enough land or money. The government’s restriction on this is unreasonable.

Since then, the toilet has become an interesting issue in my fieldwork, through which I can see various representations of “authenticity” for the guesthouse owners. Among the 50 private guesthouses I had visited in the Old Town, 90 percent of them had only one or two flush toilets in their courtyard for guests to share, and most of the owners always explain the scantiness of toilets as due to the support to “preserve the tradition and heritage” or as having to obey the government’s policy. At the same time they might also tell the guests that they had “modern” television set and telephone in each guestroom to attract the tourists who were mostly from urban areas.

Apart from the owners’ explanations, how the guests viewed the toilet problem of guesthouse also interested me. During my interviews with many guests, most of them complained about the toilet scantiness in the guesthouses. They thought it was not convincing that this “scantiness” could prevent the Old Town as heritage from too much human destruction. I met a young couple from New Zealand in a guesthouse. When we talked about the toilet problem, the woman responded angrily:

Don’t you think it is ridiculous that the government have such bullshit restriction on private toilet building in the residents’ houses? It is nothing about “heritage preservation”, but about human rights of the local residents! No wonder the local people would move out of the Old Town. Who wants to live here today if there is no basic facilities?

Homestay and the Naxi’s Everyday Life

The conflict between hosts and guests varied from house conditions (such as room size, window, television set, toilet, and shower facility, etc) to everyday lifestyle. At the beginning of my fieldwork, I kept visiting different guesthouses in order to see how the contacts between hosts and guests went on in everyday life. But, it was hardly possible

for me to find guests in guesthouses during the day because they usually traveled out for the whole day and returned at night. The “communication” between hosts and guests was not as much as I had expected. I did not find guests having fully experienced the Naxi lifestyle during their homestay. However, the hosts did have their own views on the guests’ lifestyle. One Naxi guesthouse owner who was in his forties told me,

Tourists claim that they are looking for “real Naxiness” (*zhende Naxi fengwei*: 真的纳西风味) when they choose guesthouse. Actually, they do not know anything about Naxi culture. They are only seeking those overt characteristics such as our house architecture and our traditional dress. They don’t care anything about our real life. They do not really treat the guesthouse as “our home” but their own: they are impolite when speaking to us; they ask us to sit up overnight waiting for their late return after midnight; they talk loudly at night when my old father in his eighties had already gone to bed. But we often have to tolerate them.

From the questionnaire responses, almost all guesthouse owners claimed that their original life-schedule had been changed due to the guests. In particular, they had to sit up late at night for the guests’ return. Since most of the homestay guests were young people, mostly college students and backpackers, they usually returned to the guesthouse after midnight and even before dawn.

“For them, guesthouse is nothing more than a cheap bed for rest,” one owner said.

“Then, why do you ‘have to tolerate’ them if you don’t like that?” I asked.

“Why? That is easy to understand,” he continues, “This is a ‘business’ (*jiaoyi*: 交易) obviously. ‘Customers are gods’ (*guke jiushi shangdi*: 顾客就是上帝). I invested almost 100,000 yuan (RMB) to rebuild my house into a guesthouse, and that is not a small amount. I will lose money if I do not have guests. So we have to tolerate them.”

In fact, from the questionnaires, 70 percent of the owners have spent at least RMB 80,000 yuan in renovating their houses to turn them into “guesthouses”. For some big houses, the owners invested much more in the renovation, ranging from RMB 120,000 yuan to 200,000 yuan.

Nevertheless, most of the owners thought that such investment was worthy. They claimed that it was not that hard for them to cope with these conflicts, and in most cases the guests would compromise. The guesthouse owners managed to offer favorable condition and service for the guests, and this was the only way for them to make money to keep their old houses in good condition. According to the Lijiang government, it was also “the most effective way” to “preserve Lijiang Old Town as heritage”. As an official of Lijiang County Tourism Bureau told me, “Guesthouse business in the Old Town adopts the principle of ‘preserving the houses by making use of the houses’ (*yifangyangfang*: 以房养房) and ‘preserving the heritage by making use of heritage’. This is a profitable way for Lijiang’s local development.”

Guesthouses and Local Hotels

Competition and “Advantage” of Guesthouses

When I first came to Lijiang by bus, I did not know why each time the bus would stop at a small parking-lot beside a hotel in the new town, which was neither the bus terminal nor close to the Old Town where tourists preferred to visit first, until one day I heard Xiao He, a guesthouse owner, complaining to the guests:

It is not easy for us “common people” (*laobaixing*: 老百姓) to run a guesthouse in the Old Town. It is very hard for us to compete with those big government-owned hotels. All the long-distant buses and tour buses of travel agencies only stop at the gates of those hotels so that tourists have to get off there, and in return the bus drivers or travel agencies can get a commission from the hotels. Many visitors have reserved rooms in the hotel through travel agencies before they could know about guesthouses in the Old Town. Moreover, many taxi drivers cooperate with those hotels. They can also get a commission if they take visitors to the hotel. All these tour guides, bus drivers, and taxi

drivers profit from it. But our small guesthouses cannot do anything about this. The competition is not at all fair.

However, many guesthouse owners I interviewed did not really mind this “unfair competition”, as one put it,

Homestay guesthouse is a new form, which is not yet familiar to most tourists. But more and more tourists, especially young people, are realizing the “benefits” of living in private guesthouses: not commercialized, very cheap, many cultural contacts with local people, and more chances to learn about Lijiang’s history, culture, and people, which is impossible to learn by living in the hotel. Hotels are the same everywhere; I believe tourists are seeking “something different” on the trip to Lijiang. In actual fact, those hotels are not as advantageous as guesthouses in the competition. Today’s tourists like to travel in search of “special ethnic characteristics” (*minzu fengqing*: 民族风情), and how can they find that by living in the hotels?

One of my key informants, Lao He, also a guesthouse owner himself, often showed me around the Old Town, telling me stories of different homestay guesthouse in the town. From him, I know there are at least four guesthouses in the Old Town that are in fact government-owned hotels. These guesthouses have more house helpers (hotel staff) and better facilities. They have many “standard rooms” with flush toilets that tourists preferred. The government bought these big houses from local families, and turned them into hotels. “They are not ‘homestay’ guesthouses, because there is no ‘home’ inside. Tourists cannot experience the lifestyle of Naxi families in those government-owned guesthouses,” Lao He said.

In the central area of the Old Town, a completely newly-built complex of traditional-styled house is very striking. There is a sign of “*Jiannanchun*” (剑南春, a famous brand of a liquor company in Sichuan province) hanging outside. Lao He told me that the government sold this land to the company who built this hotel lately. I went to this hotel once, and it was very fanciful inside, with modern facilities and decorations, though it had a very traditional appearance. “Too artificial!” Lao He said.

We local residents do not like this house. It is so ugly. Don't you think it is like an 80-year-old woman without a wrinkle? It looks like our Naxi's houses, but it is not; it is fake...fake heritage! Few of the workers in this hotel are Naxi, but they wear our Naxi traditional clothes. Don't recommend your friends to this one because the hotel is not Naxi at all inside, and it is very expensive. They are just for money.

Business Purpose and Moving-out Trend

It is very interesting for me to know the purposes for the native Naxi to open guesthouses in the Old Town if it is “not just for money” as they claimed. This later became a question in my questionnaire for the private guesthouse owners. The answers of 40 owners are prioritized as following:

Total Number of Guesthouse Owners: 40 persons.

Answers	Numbers	Percentage
To earn money and improve family income	28	70 %
To earn money to support children's school expenditure	9	22.5 %
To create job for the unemployed or the elderly within family	9	22.5 %
To preserve old houses by making use of the houses	8	20 %
To facilitate tourists and meet tourists' demands	7	17.5 %
To make friends or for personal interests	4	10 %

Table 1: Naxi Owners' Purposes in Guesthouse Business.

Most of the forty owners gave more than one answers for their purposes to run guesthouses, while 70 percent of them listed “to earn money” as their first priority. “Money” was the main factor. At least four private guesthouse owners did not live in their guesthouses in the Old Town. The owners and their families had moved to the new houses in the new town, and they employed some young women from the countryside to work in the guesthouses. Square Inn is a good example. It was said to be the first private guesthouse opened in the Old Town, whose owner I had planned to interview. However,

I was not able to meet the owner, and I was only able to talk briefly with one of the women working there after visiting it four times.

From my key informants, I was told that homestay tourism developed rapidly in Lijiang, which made some local owners rich and able to buy new houses in the new town. They employed workers in the guesthouses at the Old Town to serve guests, while they themselves were able to do other business at the same time. Their families moved into the new town, and they only needed “remote control” (not directly and closely managing the guesthouse business) over their guesthouses. The number of the guesthouse owners (with their families) who moved out of their guesthouses kept growing in the Old Town, especially for those big guesthouses in the tourist-concentrated areas of the Old Town, like the Square Inn. Both Lijiang’s government and the local people claimed that “the homestay guesthouses in the Old Town are the best places for tourists to experience Naxi culture through contact with the local families.” However, I found that there was not much interaction between the guests and the guesthouse owners. In fact, more and more such local owners and their families moved out of the Old Town and employed workers to run their guesthouses under the so-called “remote control” system. There appeared less and less difference between the private guesthouses and the government-owned hotels in the Old Town.

Hosts and Migrants

Nobody who has been to Lijiang could overlook the flood of migrants with the expansion in tourism in the Old Town. The migrants include storekeepers, tour guides,

restaurant and café owners, and various service workers, and others. The influx of outsiders, particularly the most recent trend of “the appearance of jade dealers from Fujian who have made their way to Lijiang via Jinghong (in Xishuangbanna) and/or Ruili (in Dehong Prefecture on the Sino-Burmese border)” in the late 1990s has become very notable in Lijiang Old Town (Peters 2001: 324).

It was reported that there were as many as 180 jade shops in the Old Town by October 1999, but the number reduced to less than five when I conducted my fieldwork from June to August 2001. A deputy director of the town told me the story: In 2000, more and more tourists complained about the jade dealers selling fake jade at unreasonable prices. The local government decided to impose tough rules on these jade-dealing outsiders in order to protect the “good reputation and image” of the “honest, nice and friendly” native people in the Old Town. The government thus set up a complex of newly-built traditional houses in the Old Town as a special and centralized site for jade dealers, so that it can easily administer the concentrated jade shops and attend to tourists’ complaints. This restriction helped mending Lijiang Old Town’s image, and resulted in decreased complaints from tourists.

However, the complaints from the native Naxi people about the migrants in Lijiang continued to be serious during my fieldwork. Many locals in the town told me that the government’s new restriction on jade dealing only changed the “surface” (*biaomian xianxiang*: 表面现象) of the problem. Indeed, many former jade dealers still keep doing jade business under the shelter of selling other permitted artifacts in the Old Town. They were just “selling dog meat while advertising the sign of a sheep head (*guayangtou maigourou*: 挂羊头卖狗肉)”, according to the locals. The local people

believed that the problem about migrants in the Old Town was getting worse, although the government has implied that it has been improved. Having heard such complaints about the outsiders' "faults" so many times, I decided to investigate how the migrants "destroy" the reputation and the environment of the historic town.

Guesthouse Run by A Foreign Migrant

By talking to some guests, I learn that there was one homestay guesthouse in the Old Town that was very popular among foreign guests. It was run by a Korean woman, Kim. One morning, I went to Kim's guesthouse. The gateway to the courtyard was rebuilt to include a café serving different kinds of drinks and snacks. I did not see Kim around. An old non-Naxi woman came up and gave me a drink menu, in both English and Chinese. I saw two or three western women drinking, so I ordered some drinks and joined their conversation.

- | | |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Researcher: | What do you think of this guesthouse? |
| Informants: | It is nice, cheap and comfortable, except the toilet...haha...(all laughed). |
| Researcher: | Is the owner Naxi? (I pretended not to know.) |
| Informants: | Of course not, that is why we moved here some days ago. |
| Researcher: | Was the former guesthouse not as good as this one? |
| Informants: | Well, it is good, but the Naxi owners don't know English. It is hard for us to communicate. The owner here can speak English, and they also serve very good western food. It is convenient, just like home. |
| Researcher: | But how can you experience Naxi culture here then? |
| Informants: | Of course we can. There are many kinds of Naxi food sold in the town, and we can see the architecture, the people, Dongba art, etc., everywhere. But as for our stay, we prefer staying somewhere as comfortable as at home. |

Later, I went into the courtyard to have a look. This was not a big guesthouse. I could not find any traditional Naxi garden decorations around this two-story house. Instead, I saw signs in English such as "Bedroom", "Men" and "Women". There were a few

national flags of different countries hung outside the upper floor, which clearly indicated the “international” identity of this guesthouse. To me, however, this traditionally built Naxi house looked very strange. At that time, Kim came back from shopping.

- Informant: Can I help you? (She saw me looking around there.)
Researcher: Yes. I'd like to stay here for a couple of days. Is there any room available?
Informant: Sorry, it is fully occupied for tonight. Would you please come tomorrow? You know, it is peak season (*wangji*: 旺季) for tourism now, and it is hard for you to find homestay guestroom here. Are you sure you will come and stay here tomorrow? If so, I can hold one bed for you...
Researcher: Well, I will see. I may come again.
Informant: Ok, no problem. But be sure to come earlier because there are many guests coming these days. Here is my name card. My name is Kim. You can also give us a call if you need us to reserve one bed for you.
Researcher: Ok, thank you. Your name card looks good, it has a very special style, just like your guesthouse. (I complimented.)
Informant: Well, because I am a Korean. And I can speak Putonghua and English. I guess my guesthouse meets some demands of the foreign guests. Many of them like my house. I am very happy to offer convenience to the foreign guests this way.
Researcher: Yes, it is good. May I ask why you come to Lijiang and do this business?
Informant: It is too hard to tell. To make it simple, I like Lijiang very much, and I hope to do something helpful here for the guests. Also I like this work, through which I get to know many good people all over the world. I like making friends.

Kim's guesthouse might be the most special one in the Old Town compared with mostly the rest of “Naxi-homestay” guesthouses; but, for those guests who were seeking “Naxiness”, it was not a good choice.

Guesthouse Run by Domestic Migrants

In addition to Kim's guesthouse, most of other outsider-owned guesthouses owned by outsiders were run by Han Chinese. It was interesting to find that many of these guesthouse owner came from the northeastern part of China. I interviewed one of them, a 40-year-old man from Shenyang, a big city of northeastern China.

- Researcher: Why did you come to Lijiang and operate a homestay guesthouse here?
- Informant: To make a living. I was laid off from my former factory in Shenyang two years ago. You know, most of the big state-owned factories in Northeast China dismissed large number of workers in recent years. It is very hard for us to be re-employed at this age while we have to support our family. I heard that there were more opportunities to earn money in Lijiang because of its rapid development in tourism, so I came here. Afterward, I rented this house from a Naxi family and then repaired it as a guesthouse by borrowing 100,000 yuan from some friends. However, it is not yet that easy to earn money from this; there are too many guesthouses in the town now... I have to pay both the rent to the house owner and the tax to the government each month despite the big difference of my income between the off season and the peak season. But for those local guesthouse owners, they don't have to worry about the monthly rent, they have much less pressure.
- Researcher: Some of the locals think that migrants do not respect the historic houses and the town, and they complain that the migrants have "destroyed" the "authentic Naxiness" in Lijiang. What do you think of this?
- Informant: It's nonsense! It has nothing to do with the migrants, but with the tourists and the Naxi themselves. Tourism develops so fast here, and the massive increase in the number of tourists has considerably changed the local people and the "Naxiness". It had already changed long before the migrants came here. The local people do not want to take risk, so they rent their houses to the outsiders. We make them rich and have enough money to move to more comfortable and modern concrete buildings in the new town. If they really respect their houses and "Naxiness", they should not have left their town... As to those local guesthouses owners, they suspect we outsiders have earned much money at their home place. They hate us just because we are their competitors.

I felt somewhat sorry for these migrants in Lijiang after talking with this man. It was hard to measure here how much the historic town and the "Naxiness" has been destroyed, and who should be responsible for that. But one point is clear: most of the local people were worried that the migrants would "destroy" their town and culture. Ironically, "this fear has become a self-fulfilling prophecy" (Peters 2001:322) when the local people kept renting out their houses to the migrants, as I have observed.

Hosts and the Local Government

In my interviews with the guesthouse owners and the tourists in Lijiang, almost all of them mentioned the local government and its management of tourism. For the locals, almost all problems they suggested were related to the “inappropriate management” of the local government. They believed that it was the government’s strong desire for money (from various kinds of taxes and administrative fees) that had led to such a commercialized tourist atmosphere in Lijiang Old Town.

Non-registered Guesthouses

I stayed in one guesthouse near the newly rebuilt Mu Palace for about two weeks in July 2001. It was far from the downtown (namely, the “golden area”) of the Old Town. The owner were an old Naxi couple in their sixties, and I called them auntie and uncle. After staying there for a few days, I realized that this was a non-registered guesthouse, which means, they did not register with the government for the permit of running the guesthouse—to avoid paying tax. Of course, it was illegal. From my survey, at least 15 percent of the local guesthouses in the town were non-registered guesthouse. The auntie later explained to me why they did this “illegally”:

We have no alternative but to run this non-registered guesthouse. You know our house locates at the periphery (*pianpi diduan*: 偏僻地段), where fewer tourists would come to visit and stay. The government only develops the downtown area of the Old Town, but ignores these periphery areas. It is unfair to us. My family invested about 150,000 yuan in turning the house into a guesthouse in late 1999, but there were not as many guests as we had anticipated, especially few during the off-season. So we dare not register to get a permit. If we do, we have to be taxed at the same rate each month regardless of our poor location and seasonal changes. How can we afford the taxes which might be more than what we could earn?

Introduced by the auntie to some other non-registered guesthouses, I got to know more of the hosts’ justifications for running the guesthouse illegally, and learned more about

their resentment toward the government. One of the aunties' nephews, a Naxi man of over 30 years old, was also a non-registered guesthouse owner. He told me angrily:

I was a worker in a paper factory in Lijiang, but was laid off a few months before it went bankrupt in March this year. The government said that those who started working there before 1986 could be re-assigned, but no re-assignment for those who started after 1986. I don't know why they do not re-assign job to young people? Anyhow, I decided to repair the inherited house and turned it into a guesthouse. I did go to ask the authorized bureau if I could be taxed less since I was unemployed. But they refused, and so my first guesthouse had to be closed several months afterward because we could not afford paying the tax at such a high rate every month. But to support my child's schooling, I re-opened the guesthouse as a non-registered guesthouse early this year. I am not the only one doing this in the town. I just learned from others. I don't want to do anything "illegal", but I cannot help. The government should give more support to the locals, and especially provide more assistance to the unemployed residents.

I spent days visiting the non-registered guesthouses at the periphery area. Besides talking with the owners, I studied the guests' comments about these non-registered guesthouses. While they felt it was somewhat too far way and inconvenient compared with the guesthouses in the downtown, many of them said that they liked the remote guesthouses that were quieter, less commercial, and much cheaper, and few of the guests minded that they were "non-registered" guesthouses. As some college students who stayed in a non-registered guesthouse told me, "It is nice to stay here, not very commercial since there are not many guests here. We are happy to see the authentic lifestyle of the Naxi in this part of the town, that is not so much contaminated by tourism as did in the town center. This is the real home of the Naxi."

Street Lamps

However, the guests' preference for the non-registered guesthouses seemed not to mitigate the hosts' complaints about the "injustice" of the governmental management

in the periphery areas. The problem of the street lamps was a big issue according to these hosts. A middle-aged local owner said:

There are very few street lights in this area. Many of the local people and guests have complained about this to the department concerned. But no use! The government just stalls by saying that they are short of money to set up more street lights. But look at the newly built Shanga-rila Road in the new town, there are more than fifty street lights operating even all night though there is no one. Why do they have that money to waste but nothing for our area? Why do the government develop only the downtown area of the Old Town but not the whole area? It is absolutely unfair! The government only does something superficial, and you must not look only at the surface. If the government does not provide us with more support, how can we afford to keep repairing and preserving our houses as heritage? The unfair management will ultimately push the locals living in the marginal areas out of the Old Town.

The hosts' worry sounded very reasonable to me because I myself really felt that it was inconvenient to stay in the area without the street lights. The hosts also told me that some robberies occurred recently at night in the area because of the lack of street lights. This did not help to encourage tourists to come. With this concern in mind, I interviewed one of directors of Lijiang County. He talked about the problem of street lamps as following:

This is a very difficult problem to handle, not as simple as many people think. You must notice that many parts of the Old Town have been soaked in tourism so much that they have become very commercialized, losing its original appearance. In fact, fewer street lights in some parts of the Old Town can help keep the town from being contaminated. If the government develops every corner in the Old Town without caring about preservation, it will be even harder for us to control the increasing destruction by the rapid growth of tourism. No preservation, no sustainable development. That's crucial in Lijiang.

Although this also sounded very convincing, it was still hard for me to fully understand that less installation of street lights could better "preserve" the historic town. Granted this, how about the locals living in these areas and their basic rights for a better and more convenient life as those living in the downtown? Why do they have to be sacrificed for the government's aim of "preservation"? This is a difficult issue to handle.

It is not easy to tell who is right and who is wrong. Yet, the interesting thing is that both the government and the locals are concerned about the rhetoric of “preservation” in their own presentations on these debates.

Conclusion

Homestay tourism has many impacts on the Lijiang Old Town and on the native Naxi people. The guesthouse owners have to interact with the guests, the local hotels, the migrants and the local government when they encounter homestay tourism. Within this local encounter, the Naxi hosts are negotiating hard with different agents to pursue their economic growth through the homestay enterprise.

In the relation with the guests, the local hosts try to use whatever they can to accommodate the guests’ needs and to show their consciousness of “preservation”. In their relation to the other hotels, the owners try to expose the injustice of the competition while emphasizing the “uncommercialness” of their homestay guesthouses. In their relation to the migrants, the owners focus on the ethnic difference “by nature” in bargaining the Naxi identity with the migrant competitors in order to accentuate the “authenticity” of their homestay guesthouses. In the relation to the local government, the local owners claim their stronger desire to “preserve” their historic old town rather than the local government while pointing out the unfair or inappropriate management of the government. In short, I find that the Naxi guesthouse owners try to identify themselves with the “preservation” of the Old Town and the Naxi culture. This seems to conform to the UNESCO’s expectation of the locals living in the World Heritage Site.

Chapter 4

“World Heritage” Discourse and Homestay Tourism

There is a Chinese saying, “When a thing is scarce, it is precious.” Lijiang, with its scarce “living” Dongba scriptures and distinctive minority (Naxi) culture, has become one of the most “precious” tourist destinations in contemporary China. The recognition of Lijiang as a “World Cultural Heritage” in 1997 by United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has spread the fame of this preciousness all over the world. While the Naxi in Lijiang meets homestay tourism, the recognition of “World Cultural Heritage” pushes the Naxi into a higher global encounter, where UNESCO, other NGOs, academia and professionals all contribute to form a globalized concept of “heritage preservation”. This chapter aims to explore how the local guesthouse owners understand the discourse of “World Heritage” as well as “heritage preservation”, and how they bring such understanding into their own daily practice and representations.

Preparation for the Inscription

In fact, before Lijiang’s inscription, many preservation projects had been done under the leadership of the Lijiang government, among which many local officials, whom I had interviewed, felt proud. In October 1994, Yunnan Provincial Government approved the implementation of the “Lijiang Old Town Preservation Five-Four-Three-Two-One Project”, which started as the prelude to the application process for Lijiang’s

inscription on the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage list. The detailed contents of this project were: 1) improving five systems (water supply and fire control, electricity and telecommunication, drainage, street lamps, and transportation) in the Old Town; 2) fulfilling four “increases” (to increase environmental-protection facilities, gardening, cultural infrastructure, and tourism reception facilities) in the Old Town; 3) refurbishing three streets (Sifang street, Xinhua street, and Qiyi street) in the Old Town; 4) decreasing two densities (construction density and population density) of the Old Town; 5) and improving the quality of environment in the Old Town. The director of Lijiang Old Town, Mr. Duan, told me that after the earthquake in 1996, the government turned the disaster into an opportunity to rebuild the Old Town for the purpose of achieving the World Heritage Site status. The government spent about 300 million RMB (31,650,000 USD) in rebuilding the Old Town: demolishing inappropriate buildings in an area of more than 20,000 square meters, constructing an intricate drainage system, and improving the condition of inner-town streets, bridges, toilets, gardens, etc. The government also rebuilt “the Mu’s Palace”, conforming to the architecture of the Ming Dynasty. As part of the Old Town protection project, the Wangu Tower and Double Stone Garden were built at the nearby hill. Moreover, the government relocated and closed down some polluting factories nearby and also managed to move some local residents out of the Old Town in order to decrease its population density. To “better preserve” the traditional houses in the Old Town, in March 1997, the Lijiang County Government assessed and selected 140 houses as specially protected residences in the Old Town. In December 2000, the government distributed a renovation allowance of RMB 500-5000 yuan per household to ninety-seven households that were honored as

“Protected Traditional Houses” (重点保护民居). All of these steps have been viewed as having immensely improved the environmental quality of the Old Town and successfully paved the way for Lijiang’s inscription in December 1997.

UNESCO and World Heritage

Objective: Preservation

In December 1997, Lijiang Old Town was inscribed on the UNESCO’s prestigious World Heritage list. UNESCO declares, “Inscription on this List confirms the exceptional and universal value of a cultural or natural site which requires protection for the benefit of all humanity.” According to Edmond Moukala, a UNESCO official in Beijing, this declaration “means that international experts have designated the site of world value worthy of preservation for all mankind. When a site is put on the World Heritage List, it receives an international recommendation and obtains the right to get funds from foreign governments. When a site is listed for preservation, the tourist industry is attracted and visitors start flowing in.” In particular, Moukala emphasized, “If you preserve only the buildings and monuments of an endangered site without protecting the cultural life around it, then the culture is likely to die” (quoted in Platt 2000).

By recognizing the need to promote sound and responsible tourism in developing countries, UNESCO has thus opted to work together with the tourism industry, to encourage it to work for preserving culture and the environment, and in the process, to develop guidelines to insure the tourism industry’s accountability. According

to Peters (2001:315), “the general consensus among all parties was that this inscription would guarantee the preservation and protection of this important historic and cultural site”.

In these concerns, the UNESCO’s objective in promoting “World Heritage” is thus to protect (or preserve) not only the tangible elements (such as buildings and monuments) but also the intangible elements (such as lifestyle) of a culture, of which the latter seems more significant to UNESCO in preserving the heritage. With this objective, the UNESCO officials believe that more direct involvement of the local communities will result not only in the increase in their “stewardship” over the heritage sites, but also in the reception from tourism, which can eventually contribute to the preservation of their heritage. In this regard, we may have a positive view on the homestay tourism in Lijiang Old Town, in which the local people have been directly involved in the receipt from tourism, and at the same time, most of them seem rather aware of the importance of “heritage preservation” by frequently adopting this notion into their everyday practice. When the local Naxi people meet the homestay tourism, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, the owners often complain that the tourists, the local hotels, the migrants, and even the local government are not as serious or honest as they are in the awareness of “preserving heritage”. To me, the local guesthouse owners seem like the only real, but powerless, protector of the heritage in their encounter with tourism.

Granted the view that “UNESCO is generally regarded as the universal protector of the world’s cultural and natural heritages” (Peters 2001:314), we may envisage that the involvement of UNESCO in the local tourism and the collaboration of the two

“protectors” (local people & UNESCO) would work better in protecting (preserving) their heritage and mitigate the conflicts generated when the Naxi meet homestay tourism. However, the conflicts seem not to have subsided in many cases of my fieldwork, but instead escalated.

“Protection Fee” and Guesthouses

In the “Action Plan for Protection of Lijiang Old Town” supervised by UNESCO, one of “actions” that have been implemented is the collection of an “Old Town Protection Fee” (*gucheng baohufei*: 古城保护费). In November 1999, the Lijiang County government called a meeting to discuss the issue of collecting a local preservation fee for Lijiang Old Town. The Lijiang Financial Bureau, Tourism Bureau, Industrial and Commercial Bureau, Construction Bureau, and the Lijiang Township Government attended the meeting. The initial plan was to charge tourists five to ten yuan RMB per day. In addition, private operators and entrepreneurs in the Old Town would be charged 1 percent to 2 percent of their monthly turnover. This plan was carried out from January 1, 2000. The local Merchandise Price Bureau, Financial Bureau, Industrial and Commercial Bureau, and County Tourism Bureau were assigned to be responsible for implementation. After further study, the formal plan of “Old Town Preservation Fee” was implemented in May 2000. The new policy was explained as one kind of administrative tax sponsored by Lijiang County government. The tax was to be used for the preservation, management, revitalization, construction, and research of Lijiang Old Town. The fee was to be collected from tourists who stay overnight in Lijiang, at twenty yuan per night. The hotels, guesthouses, and travel agencies in the

town were authorized by Lijiang County Financial Bureau to levy the tax. For various reasons, the collection of Preservation Fee stopped for a few months. It was re-implemented since January 2001 with modification that only twenty yuan was charged per person per time regardless how many days one stayed in Lijiang. According to Lijiang Government's report, a total of 9,500,000 RMB (1,190,000 USD) originating from the Old Town Protection Fee were collected between January 2001 to August 2001, among which 7,000,000 RMB (880,000 USD) had been spent on repair, preservation, and management of the Old Town. The director of Lijiang Old Town, Mr. Duan, told me that the collection of the Old Town Preservation Fee assured a stable fund for ongoing preservation of the town, which was widely supported by most of the "stakeholders" of the "World Heritage".

To both UNESCO and the local government, obviously, this would be a good way to make tourists contribute to the preservation of local heritage. However, I heard many complaints on this tax policy in my fieldwork when I talked to the guesthouse owners. First of all, this preservation-fee policy discouraged a lot of visitors (especially students and backpackers) who chose homestay in the town simply for its low price (normally only fifteen to twenty yuan/bed/night). Therefore, the number of guests staying at the local guesthouses had decreased due to this extra compulsory payment, which was equivalent to the room rent. This was detrimental to those guesthouses located in the marginal areas of the Old Town as the protection-fee policy almost blocked off the already few guests staying there. Consequently, the non-registered guesthouses in the town have increased. These non-registered guesthouses were warmly welcome by many visitors since they did not have to pay the protection fee. After all,

most of the guests I interviewed did not care whether the guesthouse they stayed was non-registered or not.

It seemed that the non-registered owners have not fulfilled the stewardship in protecting their heritage as expected by UNESCO. Why did they not support the “preservation” action of the government? A middle-aged Naxi owner commented as follows,

I don't know whether it is a good thing or not for us that Lijiang was declared a “world heritage” site by United Nations. Now, we cannot rebuild our houses as we like. The government has many restrictions on this. If our houses need repair, we are expected to use traditional materials and techniques to repair it. I don't have enough money for that... The house is mine, but those officials are real owners! Under such circumstance, I overcame many difficulties and invested a lot of money to turn my house into a guesthouse in order to get money to repair it through guesthouse income. But, you see, the officials had put forward the “Protection Fee” policy from 2000, which caused the decrease of tourists staying in Lijiang. After that, I turned my guesthouse into a non-registered one. If without guests, how can I have enough money to repair my house like this? If without guests coming to stay, what is the use for us to stay in the Old Town where everything is expensive and life is not convenient?... I don't understand why they (the government and UNESCO) would never care about our local people's interests while doing such “preservation” work... I am very happy that the “Preservation Fee” has been revoked for the guesthouses since this May (2001) because of many complaints from owners and guests'. I think they should 'preserve' the local people's interests first.

Similarly, as many local owners claimed, it was this “protection” suggested by the UNESCO that worked against their interests and encouraged them to use illegal strategies. It seemed that these local owners still had a form of “deeper stewardship” which was however not conforming to the government and UNESCO's expectation. On the contrary, many guests in Lijiang thought the compulsory Protection Fee levied on guests was unreasonable because their expenses in Lijiang had already contributed to the preservation. As for the guesthouse owners, the owners did not think they should act on the government's behalf in collecting this preservation fee that had put much pressure on their guesthouse business and reduced their profit.

Scholars and Heritage Preservation

Scholars and “Authentic” Heritage

Tourism and the recognition of “World Heritage” have not only brought Lijiang to the world but also brought the world to Lijiang. Apart from UNESCO, there are numerous foreign NGOs currently doing natural and cultural conservation projects in the Lijiang area. Many professionals and scholars, such as biologists, architects, ecologists, historians, sociologists, and anthropologists, are involved in kinds of projects of ecological, environmental, and cultural conservation in Lijiang. In addition, there are a large number of independent scholars from various countries doing their personal research on Lijiang from within and outside China. During my fieldwork period of last summer, I met seven anthropology postgraduate students from the US conducting research in the Lijiang Old Town. Notably, these scholars and professionals have played a far-reaching role among the locals of Lijiang.

In one nicely renovated guesthouse in the town, the owner (a Naxi) told me proudly that it was designed by a famous local architect two years ago, though it cost him much more money than it normally did. The owner received many compliments about the architecture from many guests, so he thought it was worthy of the investment. “I don’t know anything about architecture. So I asked the expert to help us with it. Guests like this characteristic design, which looks more like the traditional house, more like Naxi,” he said.

On the other hand, the local people appeared respectful to the authority of the

scholars and professionals by using the scholarly books to negotiate the “authenticity” of their houses (heritage) and culture in homestay tourism. Speaking of this, I want to talk about an interesting case. I lived in a guesthouse called “Y House” for a week. The homeowner was an 80-year-old woman. She came from a rich family so she could read and write. For most of the time, her grandson took care of all businesses of the guesthouse. But the old lady was also busy, busy talking with the guests. Whenever she met a visitor who could talk with her for a while, she would tell them proudly that her house has been listed as one of the “Protected Traditional Houses” by Lijiang government. She would also talk about how long the history of the house was, how many famous figures have visited her house, and how valuable the house was as an “authentic” part of Naxi heritage, etc.

In this case, the old Naxi woman had made use of the concept of “heritage” to attract tourists to come to her house. In particular, she was good at utilizing the rhetoric of “heritage” legitimized by academic and political authorities to emphasize the “authenticity” of her guesthouse. This helped her family survive the competition among guesthouses in the Old Town. It seemed the old woman welcomed and acted in conformity with the politically larger authority in “preserving heritage”. However, in another story¹ within the family of Y House, we can see how local people made use of an ethnographic book to negotiate with the local government of Lijiang.

Conflict: Existing “Heritage” and Built “Heritage”

The story was about a conflict between this family and the government that occurred when the government planned to rebuild Mu's Palace, historically a very important traditional building complex in Lijiang before Lijiang's inscription as 'World Cultural Heritage'. This rebuilding project of Mu's Palace covered forty-six acres, and the government decided to move some local families out of the old town to make room for the rebuilding of Mu's Palace. Y House was one of the local families who had been ordered to move out. However, being a famous industrial-entrepreneur local family in the Old Town for generations, the owner refused to move out of the old house. This led to a long case in court between the Y family and the local government. Indeed, this was a debate between existing heritage (the old house) and built heritage (Mu's Palace). The case was finally left to the Central Government in Beijing to rule, and the result was that the owner won unexpectedly. "How can we trifling common people beat the government at lawsuit? It is the historic book by Fang Guoyu² that saved my house. When I brought out his book that described my house in details as a precious Naxi architectural heritage, black in white (*baizhiheizide*: 白纸黑字的), they (the government) had nothing to refute," the old woman said with pride. Speaking of this, she went to her room and brought out a thick book, within which this woman's husband and the family as well as the house were described in details.

It was amazing that such a lower-educated, 80-year-old Naxi woman knew how to negotiate with the local government by using a scholar's book. This extraordinary

¹ While living in Y House, I often heard the owner's conflicting feeling about the government, but the owner's family avoided to talk about this openly. I finally got the whole story until one day the old woman knew I was an independent researcher from outside Lijiang, without any "connections" (*guanxi*: 关系) with the local government.

story has made this old woman and her house widely known in the area, and some guests were coming to her house not to stay, but to see and talk with this “old but brave and smart” Naxi woman.

UNESCO Conference and Problems

In October 2001, I attended the fifth UNESCO “Annual Conference on Culture Heritage Management and Tourism: Models for Cooperation Among Stakeholders” held in Lijiang. The conference focused on investigating and evaluating the management and preservation measures taken at several world heritage pilot sites (including Lijiang Old Town), to assess and cultivate the tourism resources, and to establish an acceptable cooperation model among all the stakeholders (different “protectors” of the heritage, including local community, the governments, NGOs, tourist industries and developers, etc). At the conference, more than 500 scholars, specialists, and officials coming from all over the world held a consensus that the cultural heritage of any community includes not only the historic places and collections that have survived from the past but also “the wide range of intangible heritage activities such as traditional ceremonial practices, music and dance, and religious practices, handicrafts, pottery, painting, sculpture and fashion”, because many living traditional cultural practices give meaning and substance to the historic places, cultural landscapes and historic built environment that define the physical identity of a place” (conference notes 2001).

But this consensus seemed ambiguous to me. First of all, how to define the term

² Fang Guoyu, a distinguished historic anthropologist on the Naxi minority.

“traditional”? In Lijiang, some ceremonial practices (such as *datiao*³: 打跳), music (such as Dongba Music), and dance (such as Dongba dance) still exist. However, they are mostly performed to tourists, not for the Naxi themselves as tradition. In addition, these performances are practiced almost everyday now in Lijiang Old Town for tourists (e.g. Dongba Music and *datiao*), and not any more for the local people’s entertainment as they used to be. During the whole period of my fieldwork, I had never seen any of the local families (of guesthouse owners) attending the music performances or *datiao* activities in their free time. I knew a Naxi girl of seventeen years old - a worker in a guesthouse in the Old Town. She was from a rural village close to Lijiang. One evening, I asked her why she did not join the *datiao* in the central square of the town when she had nothing to do. She answered with some complaint,

I do not like to go *datiao* in Lijiang now. Most of the people dancing there are tourists, crowded and disorderly. Do you know, there are many pickpockets who are from poorer rural areas mixing in the crowd. They are searching for money from the tourists... Several years ago, I often walked from my village on weekends with my elder sister and friends to Lijiang for *datiao*. We had a lot of fun those days. Many young people found their lovers at *datiao*, so did my elder sister. But it is changed now. There are few local Naxi people going to *dataio*, no fun at all.

Obviously, *datiao* practice, though existing, has lost its “traditional” meanings and functions in today’s Lijiang. In addition, with the trend of local families moving out as mentioned earlier, the “traditional” participants in these activities appeared to be gradually replaced by outsiders. Subsequently, these changes seem to be a challenge to the Conference’s aim of preserving such traditional activities as intangible cultural heritage.

Furthermore, the conference advocated the view that “activities associated with

³ A traditional Naxi group dance revolving around a bonfire in the evening after a hard-working day.

heritage conservation should include not only the physical protection and conservation of the cultural heritage resources but also ‘the communication and presentation of the significance of those resources to the local people, in order to build a sense of pride’ and reinforce the sense of identity in the local community” (conference notes 2001). This was similar to the major objective of UNESCO – to build “a sense of stewardship” among the local peoples of the heritage community. However, this sense of “pride” or “stewardship” seemed hard to find from all of the local people in the Old Town.

As mentioned earlier, before Lijiang’s “world-heritage” recognition, the Lijiang government had rebuilt one of most significant Naxi “heritages” in the Old Town: Mu Palace. However, this rebuilt heritage not only caused conflict with Y House as an existing heritage, it also caused conflicts with many local families, especially those guesthouses, located around the rebuilt Mu Palace. One of the guesthouse owners told me,

I cannot see any good rebuilding the Mu Palace. They (the government) spent several millions (of money) on it, claiming that the Palace represents the glorious history of the Naxi. They did it actually in order to win the inscription of “World Heritage” for Lijiang. We local people think it (rebuilding Mu Palace) is a failure, first in that its gate ticket charges as high as thirty-five yuan/person. None of our local people in the town would go in to visit it, such a new and fake building! Much less to those rural people from nearby villages, they cannot afford the high gate ticket. Only the stupid group tourists have to pay for visiting that place because it is always one of compulsory programs arranged by the tour companies. How can the government collect back so much money without these tourists? In addition, saying “to facilitate their management”, the manager of the Palace closed its back door, which blocked tourists approaching this already-peripheral area where we live. That is why our guesthouse business is going badly. You see, the Mu Palace has no good for us locals at all.

The rebuilding of the Mu Palace as the “significant heritage” of Naxi seemed not to have built “the sense of pride” among these local people as expected by UNESCO and the government. Rather, it aroused the resentment of the locals to heritage rebuilding projects and to the government. The Mu’s Palace, though a representation of Naxi’s

heritage, is however only serving tourists now as a mere tourist spot in Lijiang. As I have found out, less than 1 percent of the local people have entered this built heritage, which was claimed as accounting for much significance of Lijiang's inscription in the World Heritage List of UNESCO.

During the Conference period in Lijiang, all conference participants were organized to visit the Old Town, and most of them had the same impression: it is too commercialized. In particular, some of them found that there were too many guesthouses in the town, which made it look like a "guesthouse town" rather than a town where the Naxi lived authentically. I do not know if any new policies were made by the conference and implemented to prevent the Old Town from being further commercialized. But several months after the conference, I heard of a rumor that spread widely among the local people: a Gate Tax of eighty yuan per person to access the Old Town might be levied from sometime in 2002. This resulted in a "gate-tax panic" among the guesthouse owners who had just got rid of the "protection-fee panic" a few months before. Some of my guesthouse owner informants bitterly complained about this UNESCO Conference which made such a "stupid decision" on Lijiang. A month ago learned from a tourism forum in website of *www.sina.com* that this Gate Tax polices was finally revoked.

I myself also feel the rapid commercialization in Lijiang Old Town with the the growth of tourism while I think it needs more control. Like the increase of guesthouses in the town, it needs to be led to a path of balancing the relationship of (economic) development and (heritage) conservation. This is, again, another challenge to UNESCO and the local government. While such conservative policies as "protection fee" and

“gate tax” in Lijiang seemed to bring both the control of the tourism and the conservation of heritage, it also brought “panic” to the local people, particularly the local entrepreneurs making money from tourism. Moreover, these policies appeared to result in the locals having bitterness against the government and other authorities, instead of having “a sense of pride/stewardship” over their heritage.

At the Lijiang’s conference, I attended different presentations and discussions about the conservation and development issues in some World Heritage sites of other countries. I realized that Lijiang’s development has become a worldwide business for “all humanity” after its recognition as a World Cultural Heritage site. Conservation made in Lijiang Old Town has become a global concern, and scholars of different disciplines and the UNESCO officials act together to bring new policies and regulations to Lijiang’s local development under the globalized concept of “heritage conservation”. While the policies and regulations are set up by the officials, it is the local people who have to face and endure them. Conflicts between the two parties are likely to occur. Furthermore, as UNESCO became more and more powerful in helping the local government to make decisions about Lijiang’s conservation and development projects, the local people tend to regard UNESCO and the local government as the same authority, which are viewed as “lacking understanding” by the local people.

Conclusion

After Lijiang’s recognition as World Cultural Heritage in 1997, the UNESCO officials, the international scholars and professionals, and the local government have

worked together on the projects of “heritage conservation” in Lijiang.

This recognition has accelerated the development of homestay tourism in the Old Town. On the other hand, these conservation projects seem to lead to the detriment of the guesthouse owners’ interest of economic pursuit, which resulted in bitterness towards the local government. However, we have seen that the local people could strategically borrow the concept of “heritage” from the academic authority to support their negotiation with the government. And many local people could apply the “heritage” discourse into their daily conversations and practices to claim that they were seriously aware of the conservation of heritage but had to endure the “inappropriate conservation projects” led by the government and UNESCO in Lijiang. Thus, the conflicts continue between the local people and the local government in “heritage conservation” projects.

Given these continuing conflicts, we need to rethink the nature of such concepts as “heritage” and “heritage conservation” legitimized by UNESCO as well as academic authority. To approach this, we need to have an in-depth understanding of the “authenticity” within the “ethnic cultural heritage tourism”, which tourists are searching for and which local people, the local government, and UNESCO are attempting to conserve.

Chapter 5

“Authenticity” within Homestay Tourism

In Chapters 3 and 4, we have seen how the local guesthouse owners in Lijiang Old Town selected various understandings about the Naxi culture from different players to actively construct their “authentic Naxiness” within homestay tourism. The “authenticity” of Naxi culture appears as core to the attraction of the guesthouses in Lijiang. Instead of providing a new version of the “authenticity” of Naxi culture in this chapter, I will attempt to arrive at a deeper understanding of the construction process of “authenticity” by examining three key issues within homestay tourism: ethnicity, home, and heritage.

Constructing Naxi Ethnicity

As Wood (1984) argues, where ethnicity is the product, we are dealing with ethnic tourism rather than cultural tourism. In his view, the role of culture in cultural tourism is contextual: it shaped the tourists’ experience in general, “without a particular focus on the uniqueness of a specific cultural identity” while ethnic tourism focused on “people performing a cultural identity, the uniqueness of which is being marketed for tourists.” Given Wood’s argument, it is interesting to explore how Naxi ethnicity has been “produced” (or reproduced) in Lijiang, especially within its tourism development.

The growth of ethnic tourism in Lijiang began in 1986 when the State Council designated the Old Town as a national treasure. Under pressure from the state, and with

the local government's warm promotion of tourism development in the so-called "minority nationality areas" (*shaoshu minzu diqu*: 少数民族地区), "Naxi culture" in Lijiang has been taken with much prestige into its cultural commoditization (Chao 1996:226). From 1986 to the early 1990s, many television documentaries about "distinctive Naxiness of Lijiang" were produced and widely distributed in China, which helped make Lijiang well known nationally. A four-hour documentary about Lijiang was aired in the United States as a National Geographic Society special on PBS television. Lijiang Old Town was also featured in the Travel section of the *New York Times*, and many other articles in leading Chinese and international newspapers (McKhann 2001:4). Through the media, unique images about Lijiang and its Naxi people have reached the world extensively. Advertising, and especially the tourist brochure, has been the cultural bait for holiday packages. The guidebooks about Lijiang have provided Naxi cultural framework for tourists to travel. In this respect, the influence of the media on the construction of "Naxi culture" and the growth of Lijiang's ethnic tourism should not be underestimated.

In Lijiang, I was told that the Naxi was rooted in "Dongba culture". A similar view shared by other scholars (Chao 1996, White 1997) identified "Dongba culture" as central to the representation of the Naxi in Lijiang. For example, local owners often attributed the "difference" between their guesthouses and those owned by migrants to the "Dongba culture" of the Naxi —claiming that it was "Dongba culture" that originated the concept of ecological balance and environmental conservation. The local people often complained about the migrant residents in Lijiang destroying the inner-town canals' cleanness in the Old Town. More importantly, "Dongba culture" became a

symbol of the “Naxi authenticity”. In Lijiang, most of local guesthouse owners frequently complained about two types of migrants: tour guides and non-local owners of guesthouses. As a 30-year-old local owner said,

Look at those tour guides leading groups of visitors to the Old Town everyday, most of them are not Naxi! They are graduates from Kunming, Sichuan, or other places of China. They pretend to be Naxi and they dressed in our Naxi traditional costume. By memorizing the Naxi’s stories from tourist books and freely making up the history of the town, they treat the tourists as idiots! It is quite often for us to hear different “fanciful stories” that they have created for the tourists. And the tourists believe them because they do not know anything about the Naxi of the Old Town. The migrant tour guides destroy the “authenticity” (*zhengzongxing*: 正宗性) of our Naxi! Worse than that, they act in collusion with the hotels, restaurants, and souvenir shops by leading the tourists to these places spending money, so that the guides can get rebates. Many tourists realize it afterward, and there are many complaints about them. Hai...(sigh)...these “fake-Naxi” (*maochongde*: 冒充的) guides really insult our Naxi’s reputation!

In the same tone toward the migrant guides, many local Naxi owners also worry about the appearance of the guesthouses run by non-locals in the town. From a random survey of forty-six private guesthouses in the Old Town I did at the beginning of the fieldwork, there were seven guesthouses run by migrants. The proportion of such migrant-running guesthouses in the Old Town might have increased after that. A local owner in her late 50s talked with me in her guesthouse.

Researcher: Are there many guesthouses in the Old Town run by outsiders?

Informant: Not too many, but there are more and more now.

Researcher: Why would the local people rent the houses to the outsiders instead of doing guesthouse business by themselves?

Informant: Well, Naxi people are not good at “doing business” (*zuoshengyi*: 做生意). You know, we have to invest a lot of money to open a guesthouse, which is highly risky. So, many local people just rent their houses to the outsiders without taking any risk, and these local people can still earn some money through the rents they collect each month from the non-local owners.

Researcher: Are Naxi’s guesthouses different from those run by outsiders?

Informant: Yes, of course they are different. But I know many guests do not mind whether the guesthouse owners are Naxi or not. Tourists always claim to seek “real Naxiness” (*naxiwei'er*: 纳西味儿) when they choose

guesthouse. In fact, they only pay attention to some external characteristics, such as the architecture of houses, the location of the area, and the price of room... In fact, you can find we Naxi people are different from those outsiders: we are more honest and friendly. They are commercialized, pursuing money only, but we are not. We are doing our best to preserve the houses and the Old Town, while they do not treasure the houses and the historic town, which resulted in several fires recently... After they have earned enough money in Lijiang, they will go away.

Like this informant, the local guesthouse owners attributed to “Dongba culture” the “differences” between them and the migrants. As they often asserted, “that is because they (migrants) do not have Dongba culture.” In particular, Naxi’s “honesty”, “sincerity”, “forthrightness”, “nature-loving”, “hygiene-caring”, “warm-heartedness”, “friendliness”, etc, which the locals said the Han migrants lacked, were attributed to the “Dongba culture” by the locals themselves. Through these narratives, “Dongba culture” was identified as the local people’s method of empowerment —by stressing authenticity of the Naxi. But, what is “Dongba culture”?

Generally speaking, “Dongba culture” was initiated by the state-driven project to envision the post-Mao multi-ethnic nation. As Chao (1996:211) argues, “the transformation of Dongba religion into ‘Dongba culture’ may be understood as an ‘invention of tradition’ aimed at bolstering Naxi ethnic identity and prestige, an invention that was inspired by, and took place in concert with, a broader national trend of rediscovering and affirming ethnic diversity in post-Mao-era China.” Chao’s examination of the emergence of “Dongba culture” illustrates that Dongba culture is, however, “not something that articulates primordial historical transformations since 1949,” but something that suddenly percolates upward and manifests itself in the post-Mao era. In fact, the conception of Dongba culture “does not faithfully correspond to how local Naxi construct their own identity” (Chao 1996:212-216). In Lijiang, the Naxi

locals, particularly those living in the town, knew little about the Dongba religion and its major dogmas and contents. Similarly, few of them knew the “Dongba pictographic script” that has been treated as a pillar of “living Naxi culture”.

In Lijiang Old Town, as mentioned in chapter 3, almost every guesthouse owner has their business card, most of which are featured with distinctive designs, pleasant names, and brief promotion of the houses (low price, traditional Naxi architecture, authentic Naxi owner, etc). Many of the guesthouse cards have some “Dongba symbols”¹ to portray their “authentic Naxiness”. But, in fact, few of the local Naxi owners in the town actually understand the meaning of these Dongba symbols and how they are pronounced. Most of the local owners said that they just asked some artists or “specialists” to design the cards along with the symbols. To represent their “Dongba culture”, the local owners have incorporated the Dongba pictographs into their otherwise modernist business promotion (like the guesthouse cards), which are “marketed as part of the array of ‘contemporary Dongba culture’”(Chao 1996:228). By doing this, the local guesthouse owners sought to elevate the Naxi’s “differences” by representing the past in terms of “Dongba culture”. Thus, in cooperating with the development of ethnicity led by the state, the local people in Lijiang actively incorporated the concept of “Dongba culture” —as the core of the Naxi culture —into their daily lives, and particularly in their assertion about “ethnic authenticity” within the ethnic tourism.

In my survey of the guests, there were 62 out of 101 persons (sixty percent of the sample) who claimed that “Naxi identity” of the guesthouse owners was important when

¹ I do not call them “dongba characters” since most of them are re-created by artists.

they chose a guesthouse. However, few guests realized that the “Naxi identity” they searched for was a product created by the locals, mass media, and the state.

Constructing “Home”

Whose Home?

Lijiang Old Town had been the traditional dwelling place, and hub to all kinds of activities for the Naxi for hundreds of years before the early 1990s, when tourism began to grow in the area. After that, tourists, non-local entrepreneurs, rural floating people, and urban migrants have poured into Lijiang.

During my fieldwork, it was interesting to hear many guesthouse owners talked often about the “home” problem. One middle-aged Naxi man told me,

Now we usually renovate our house according to the needs of tourists. They prefer private flush toilet, television in the room, and big windows on the wall, though these do not conform to the Naxi’s architecture style. But we try our best to meet their needs anyway when renovating the house because it is “guesthouse” now, not simply our home.

In Lijiang Old Town, many small restaurants, guesthouses, and souvenir shops, which sprang up in the early 1990s and initially run by the local people, were now increasingly run by urban migrants. Many locals moved out of the Old Town, renting their houses to outside entrepreneurs coming from Kunming, Dali, and other provinces such as Sichuan, Guangxi, and Fujian. According to Peters (2001), the local people in the Old Town seemed to no longer have the sense of stewardship over their historic town. In particular, as discussed earlier, a number of guesthouses in the town became enterprises of urban Han migrants, offering “Han homestay” rather than “Naxi homestay”. Moreover, a few guesthouse owners were even from other countries (e.g. France, Korea), offering “international homestay” in the Old Town. These Naxi houses gradually became the

“home” of the urban migrants. As a Naxi put it, “One of my two neighbors opened a guesthouse, the other rented his house to a migrant family from Guangxi. I feel like a stranger in my own home. When I walk out into the streets of the town, all I see are outsiders (tourists)!”

The boundary between “the home of Naxi”, “the home of guests”, and “the home of migrants” seemed very blurred when Lijiang encounters homestay tourism. Speaking of “homestay” tourism, it is important to explore the “home” issue here, simply put, whose home?

Naxi's Home?

Although there seems to be a consensus among the majority of the locals, tourists, migrants and local government that Lijiang is obviously the home of the Naxi, my findings in the field indicate that the issue of “home” in Lijiang was not so simple. As mentioned earlier, most of the guesthouse owners had invested lots of money in renovating their houses to attract tourists. They rebuilt their walls with soundproof construction material in the middle layer between the traditional wooden materials. The traditional structure of the houses was all made of wood, but not soundproof and very inconvenient to the urban guests. In addition, after renovations many guesthouses had new big windows on the walls in every room, to meet the guests’ demands, which the local owners said “look beautiful and modern”. However, according to the Naxi’s tradition, no window (even a small one) is allowed in the middle rooms that used to be the living room for Naxi families. Apart from these changes in the physical features of a Naxi home, the lifestyle of guesthouse owners’ families had been affected substantially

as well: their everyday routine, their cooking style, and their language were subjected to compromise in the course of dealing of guests, as described in Chapter 3.

At this point, an answer to the question of “whose home” appears to be this: the home of Naxi has become the home of tourists in Lijiang.

Tourists’ Home?

Most of the tourists in my survey claimed they were seeking the “unique”, “exotic” and “authentic” “Naxi homestay experience” in Lijiang. This point is reflected in one of the questions of my survey of homestay guests in Lijiang, as follows:

Question: What is the main reason for you to choose “homestay guesthouse” to stay?

Answer categories (by coding)	Domestic Guests (140)	Foreign Guests (45)	Total (185)
Naxi culture/Lifestyle	67	16	83
Cheap Price/Rent	33	16	49
Comfort/Convenience	25	3	28
Architecture/Environment of the Houses	9	4	13
Sense of being at home/Friendliness	6	6	12

Table 2: Tourists’ Reasons for Homestay.

From the numbers above, we can see that 83 out of 185 persons put “Naxi culture/Lifestyle” as the first reason (or purpose) for their homestay in Lijiang. Given so many changes of the Naxi’s houses brought by tourism as discussed earlier, it seems ironic for the guests to stay in a house that looks similar to their own homes. However, I found, as shown from the survey below, that most homestay guests in Lijiang felt “satisfied” with their homestay experiences.

Question: How much are you satisfied with the homestay guesthouse where you stay?

	Very Satisfied	Not Bad	Just So-So	Not Satisfied	Too Bad
Domestic Guests (140)	92	40	6	2	0
Foreign Guests (45)	26	16	3	0	0
Total (185)	118	56	9	2	0

Table 3: Tourists’ Satisfaction with Homestay.

The table shows that less than 6 percent (11 out of 185) guests could be categorized as “not satisfied” (including “just so-so”) with the guesthouses they were staying in. That is, most of the guests were satisfied with what they were seeking in homestay tourism of Lijiang. In this regard, there is little doubt to say that the present culture in Lijiang Old Town, which has been reconstructed by the local people within the homestay tourism, did meet the majority of the tourists’ demands and expectations.

In another word, most of the homestay tourists have found the “authenticity” of Naxi culture in Lijiang that they had expected: most tourists view the “guesthouses” in Lijiang as homes of the Naxi: “unique” and “distinctive”.

Home of Homes

Going beyond the issue between the hosts and guests over the question of to whom the “home” belongs, we need to go deeper to the nature of “home” within the context of tourism.

Above all, tourism is a certain type of consumption. According to Sack (1992:148), the consumption of tourism is fueled by “insatiable appetites for commodities”, and these desires from the use of material objects are less than from our desires to “find and express our personal and group identities in a world of strangers”.

Given this view, we can say that tourists are preoccupied with some sense of “home” before consuming commodities in tourism, even in another cultural context. That is, they are also looking for something “familiar” in the tourist settings that is similar to their home, though subconsciously.

As shown in the table of the earlier part of this chapter, 12 out of 185 persons, that is, 6.5 percent of the guests claimed finding the “sense of being at home” or “friendliness” in the homestay of Lijiang. In addition, the answers of “comfort/convenience” also implied a certain “sense of home”. But, how should we understand the “sense of home”? In this concern, Sack (1992:148-149) provides his interpretation as follows,

Most selves have homes. Home does not have to be any particular place of physical structure; home is a place where we are at ease and can let our guard down. As the public realm has become more difficult to share, we literally do find ourselves more at home in the private realm. The norm is to have our physical homes provide this context... The idealization is of home as a haven from a heartless world, where the self can develop... The association of self with home is reinforced by the fact that, in a consumer society, the home is the primary repository of commodities used to define ourselves and separate our private world from the public world.

Based on the above, when tourists look for guesthouses, they demand not only to find a “home” that provides comfort, convenience, intimate relationships, but also to find comfort, privacy, and enjoyment through homestay experience. In short, it is a search for “existential authenticity” (Wang 1999:358), which “denotes a special state of being in which one is true to oneself, and acts as a counterdose to the loss of ‘true self’ in public roles and public spheres.” The guesthouse owners have consciously caught this desire of the guests, and try the best to improve the commodities (such as walls, windows, toilets, and kinds of services with “compromise”, etc) in the houses to help the guests “define themselves”. Furthermore, different choices in accommodation

(hotels, guesthouses, trekker lodges) for tourists in Lijiang, can place the tourists in very different living environments, allowing them to express different parts of their “selves”, or their own “sense of comfort/convenience/freedom” when they are escaping from their normal home context. It is the guests’ search for their “self”, which is understood as the “sense of home”, through the process of consuming commodities in tourist destinations that changes the “home of the hosts” into the “home of the guests”. In fact, within ethnic tourism, tourists are seeking a kind of “authenticity” that combines their imagery of the “other” culture and their inherent interpretation of the “sense of home”. I would call it “comfortable-authenticity”.

When the local people were constructing guesthouses in accordance to the guests’ “comfortable-authenticity”, the initial “Naxi’s home” now became part of the guests’ home. Meanwhile, the local people in the Old Town could not feel as “comfortable” and “free” in their houses as before since the homestay tourism drew their backstage home life into the front stage to please tourists. Therefore, many old-town families moved into the new town of Lijiang and bought or built their new houses there, while profiting by renting out their houses and storefronts to the migrant entrepreneurs in the Old Town. By doing this, they approached the position of having their real “homes” (in the new town), namely, the places that can be used to escape from work and also from their other homes (in the Old Town).

Similarly, the non-local owners also treated their guesthouses in Lijiang as part of their “home”. Firstly, the changes in the physical features of the houses provided contexts for the migrants to create “a home setting”. As described in the earlier case about the Korean guesthouse run by Kim, the foreign owner arranged the furniture,

paintings, and knickknacks (like different national flags hung in the courtyard) to create any context she pleased. As Sack (1992:149) explains, these contexts can be extensions of “self” (of the owner) with subjectivity. More importantly, they contain and embody some public meanings, from which the guests of homestay can understand the public language of the settings in the house. This, in turn, provides contexts for the guests to create the “sense of home” from their perspectives. Based on this, guests will find the “comfortable-authenticity” in the “other” home context. In this sense, the migrant owners seem “powerful” and “free” in coping with homestay-tourism consumption in the Old Town. They sometimes even subordinate the local owners. Different migrants would create different “home” contexts in the guesthouse businesses where they could express themselves and fulfill their economic desires as they wished. Thus, such guesthouses were partially home to the migrants.

In short, “homestay guesthouses” in Lijiang are not only homes for the Naxi, but also for guests and migrants. That is “home of homes”, which has been constructed together by the Naxi, the guests, and the migrants in homestay tourism. The symbolic capacity of the “home” is inexhaustible, but it is obvious that, the guests, the migrants and the local owners are sharing the Lijiang’s houses as their individual “homes” in different ways. In fact, the Naxi owners, the guests, and the migrants were all experiencing “homestay” regardless their different roles. In light of Wang’s argument on “existential authenticity” which emphasizes tourist activity and experience (Wang 1999), I would say that the Naxi guesthouse owners and the migrants in Lijiang could also feel they themselves were much more authentic and more freely self-expressed within the homestay experience than in their everyday life. In this sense, the

guesthouses in Lijiang can be viewed as a “home of homes” to the different people in which they can search for their “authentic selves”, or for the “existential authenticity”.

Constructing Heritage

By UNESCO

In December 1997, Lijiang was recognized as a “World Cultural Heritage” site by UNESCO, which implies that the Naxi in Lijiang live with “one of the world’s few remaining pristine cultures with a unique, ancient, but living Dongba culture (Chao 1996:227). But, what is “cultural heritage”?

According to the Article 1 of the *UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* of 1972, the follows are considered as “cultural heritage”:

monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements of structures of an archaeological nature... which are of outstanding universal value...;
groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape...;
sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and of man...

In this sense, Lijiang Old Town should be viewed as groups of building and sites in commemoration of the Naxi’s history of over 800 years. Portraying Lijiang Old Town’s natural and cultural past in the present has been a fast developing enterprise since the mid 1980s. The rapid tourism expansion of Lijiang Old Town after its recognition as a World Heritage Site in the past few years has demonstrated the economic potential of heritage tourist sites. Then, what links heritage and tourism?

As early as 1970, UNESCO (1970:61) stated, “Monuments attract tourists. Tourists bring money. It is only natural that part of this money should serve to maintain, to restore and to display the monuments and thus the monuments attract still more tourists. Such is the very simple reasoning behind Unesco’s cultural tourism policy.” Obviously, apart from their immense cultural significance, economic value has been attached to historical monuments. The term “heritage” in a broader sense is generally associated with the word “inheritance” —something transferred from one generation to another. Playing the role of the carrier of historical values from the past, heritage is regarded as part of the cultural traditions of a society. As Boniface and Fowler (1993) explain, when our fast changing modern world destroys both our material and cultural remnants of the past at a rapid rate, this rate also produces a sense of irretrievable loss, this loss finds its “cultural expression” in terms of “nostalgia”, which has significant implications for tourism (cf. Graburn 1995). In addition, this threat of traditional culture loss, together with the emergence of a homogeneous “global culture” or a “global village”, has brought both concerns about “authenticity” to tourists, and commercial concerns of the possibility of inventing tradition (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) to host people.

Viewed as an important part of “cultural heritage” of Lijiang, the houses with traditional architecture in the Old Town find their economic values through the guesthouse business. The UNESCO’s recognition has boosted the guesthouse businesses in Lijiang since 1997. In particular, this UNESCO’s recognition seems to legitimize the “authenticity” of Naxi culture in Lijiang Old Town. An unadulterated value has been added to this historic town. Moreover, as stated by UNESCO (1970:62), “If monuments

are assigned a mission in the promotion of tourism, not only will they be more easily preserved, but knowledge and appreciation of them will be vastly enhanced.” The cultural heritage as in Lijiang is expected to be “preserved” hand in hand with tourism development. UNESCO is viewed as the highest authority in this “preservation” project, in which various scholars and professionals are utilized.

By Architects

Above all, to preserve Lijiang’s houses as a part of cultural heritage requires a lot of professionals, particularly, architects. There are many local, domestic, and international architects in Lijiang each year, doing research or working as consultants.

In Lijiang, I met a Ph.D student of architecture in a local bookstore of the Old Town. She was from Sichuan Province, not too far from Lijiang. When we happened to talk about the houses in the Old Town, she lamented about the inappropriate renovation and severe disruption of the historic houses in Lijiang Old Town,

This is my fifth time to visit Lijiang. Every time I find the disruption of the houses by inappropriate rebuilding and construction has increased. It is very dangerous if the government does not realize this as early as possible. So many non-local entrepreneurs came here and rebuilt the houses in various ways, and the local people do not know how to repair their own houses properly. The survival of the traditional architecture is threatened by process of commercialization in the town... I hope I can find a right local house in the Old Town this time, and then I will move to Lijiang with my husband, who is an architecture professor. We planned to live in Lijiang for some years and help the local people rebuild their houses in the traditional way... I am sure our design will best fit the Lijiang’s style.

After talking with this woman, I felt it was funny that, regardless of who (even a scholar, an “expert”, an official, a government, or an organization) wants to help bring back the traditional (past) look of the Old Town, he or she does not realize that their contribution has also change the appearance of the town because they will become part of it. Imagine

Lijiang Old Town as a picture, how can we prevent its look from being changed while putting ourselves inside this picture?

By the Local Government

As discussed in previous chapters, the local government of Lijiang has played a key role in the “heritage preservation” project in Lijiang. Following the preservation procedures legitimized by UNESCO, the government has made various policies and regulations on how to “preserve the traditional houses” in Lijiang Old Town. This has resulted in many conflicts between the local families and the government, affecting particularly the guesthouse owners in the town.

In speaking of how the local government “preserve” Lijiang Old Town as “World Heritage”, McKhann (2001:7-8) shows the same concern that the government is reconstructing, rather than preserving it. As he has noted, under the local government impetus to “clean up” (*qingli*: 清理) the Old Town (in line with imagined tourist sensibilities), many things (such as products and foodstuffs) are banned from the street now, as are the activities that produce them. The most obvious example of the changing valuation of public space concerns the Old Town Square (*sifang jie*: 四方街). Before the mid-1990s, the square served for centuries as a market for meat, agricultural product, prepared foods and handicrafts. The efforts to “clean up” the Old Town resulted first in the expulsion of butchers, and later prepared food and product vendors, to increasingly remote locations. Now the square is occupied exclusively by non-local peddlers hawking trinkets, and by tables reaching out from trendy cafes. Today, most of the Old Town residents must now walk greater distances to do their daily shopping.

The policies adopted in rebuilding the Old Town before Lijiang's designation in December 1997, and those policies implemented in "preserving" the "World Heritage" after the inscription, have plagued the local residents with the kinds of problems mentioned in Chapter 4. The local people mostly attribute these problems to the government's inappropriate management —neglecting the interests of the local people.

By the Naxi

As described in previous chapters, the Naxi people actively adopted the discourse of "heritage" and "heritage conservation" in their daily conversation and practices. Concerning the homestay tourism, the local guesthouse owners were "preserving" their houses as "heritage" by using the traditional materials required by the local government and following the architects' advice on renovation. In the name of "heritage preservation", the local people reconstructed guesthouse according to the tourists' appetites turning them into a "home of homes" to cater for guests coming from different home contexts. With such efforts, the local guesthouse owners attempted to promote their guesthouses as a unification of the "ancient", "traditional", and "authentic" Naxi heritage.

Furthermore, to the local guesthouse owners, the honor of "world heritage" to Lijiang indicated a prosperous future. During my stay in a small guesthouse of Lijiang, I felt very strange that the owner often said "No Offer" whenever foreign guests came in and asked for homestay. Later the woman owner told me why:

I don't like having foreigners live here at present. You know, they usually have too much perfume so that the scent contaminates my bed sheets, and I have to wash them right after they leave even though they've just stayed for one or two nights...too often washing damages my sheets. My guesthouse is small, and I cannot afford to do that. But, the foreigners will be welcome here in the near future when I have enough money to

expand my guesthouse to the hotel scale. At that time, I don't need to worry about this...I am very positive about this future because we are "World Heritage" now; I am sure there will be more and more foreigners coming to Lijiang.

In another guesthouse, the old Naxi guesthouse owner asked me if I knew English. I said yes, then she asked me, "Could you please help me post my guesthouse's name, address and telephone number in English on the web?" "On the web?" I repeated. "Yes," the old woman said,

Ever since a foreign guest in the guesthouse next door helped the owner to post their guesthouse's information on the web, there have been more foreign guests coming to stay in their house than before. The neighbor told me that foreigners like to check traveling information on the web, especially suggestions from other tourists. So just tell them that my house is "authentic" Naxi heritage. I think tourists must be very interested in living in the authentic "world-heritage" house. No one in my family knows how to use the Internet, so I ask for your help.

I was so surprised when I heard this from an old, un-educated Naxi woman. Although she did not know anything about the Internet or "world heritage", she asked me to help her with promoting her house as "authentic Naxi heritage" to the world, that is, to help her with constructing the Naxi's heritage. Obviously, the "heritage" ideology has set the local people to dream of their economic prosperity in the future. In turn, this dream encourages them to pursue further reconstruction of the "heritage" with respect to their guesthouse business.

Heritage and Authenticity

It seems that a modern trend among global travelers is to "seek novelty through a return to traditional social values; whose new tastes and styles refer back to the past; and whose demands have become more specialized", that is, a search for "authenticity", which is different from "those obtainable through mass tourism" (Nuryanti 1996:250).

Assuming this trend, it is interesting to explore if such legitimized “heritage site” as Lijiang Old Town is “more authentic” than other tourist destinations.

Heritage (especially, cultural heritage), in its nature, implies stability or continuity, whereas tourism involves change. Thus, the encounter concerning the two at times is characterized by a series of contradictions. Since tourism is often conceptualized, in postmodern society as a highly complex series of production-related activities and characterized by rapid movements through areas in such so-called “global village”, there is “an infinite possibility of movements combined with interlocking scales of time and space involving international, national, regional and local resources when tourists are experiencing this global village” (Nuryanti 1996:250). This, again, is less than reconstructing. In addition, Boniface and Fowler (1993:149-163) have an inspiring view about the nature of “heritage tourism” that, in our fast shifting and globalized “touristic” life, “any present culture therefore are the elements of a definable culture, unfixed in place or race or history”, which help us understand the nature of tourism, not as “tourism industry”, but as “tourism culture”. Accordingly, when the past (namely, heritage) becomes increasingly exploited by the tourism industry, as well as the presentation of the past itself continues to be “commoditized”, a “heritage culture” emerges. This “heritage culture” produces characteristic results, in which the contemporary people (especially the hosts) tend to behave in a “referring-to-the-past” sort of way, differently from their domestic lives. Thus, the “authenticity” that tourists seek through the “heritage tourism” is virtually being “re-constructed” rather than being “preserved” or “conserved” as the timeless sediment of the past.

Accordingly, we can also regard “heritage” as an industry that is analogous to tourism industry. This “heritage industry” involves different agents as the local people, tourists, the local government, international organizations, and various scholars and professionals working together to re-construct the so-called “authentic past” in present time. In this concern, the project of “World Heritage” advocated by UNESCO is just a bigger and more powerful “industry”. It neither preserves the past in a timeless authentic representation nor prevents the past culture from being changed or “destroyed”. Rather, it accelerates the process of the reproduction/reconstruction of the culture by offering exceptional money, knowledge/ideology, and space, in short as lots of power, to the local people of subjectivity.

At this point, I would say that the legitimacy of “heritage” or even “World Heritage” has not made the heritage sites more authentic, at least, in terms of the authenticity as conceptualized by UNESCO, historians, anthropologists, and the like. In fact, there is no such “authenticity” if we view culture as a dynamic and ever-changing system of meanings. The authenticity of a culture, either in the past or the present, is being reconstructed by different dynamic agencies in the society. If there is something authentic in its representations, it is only “authentic” by being reconstructed.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the issues about Lijiang’s homestay tourism, namely ethnicity, home, and heritage as well as the related issue of authenticity have been explored. The complexity of Lijiang’s tourism featured by the “ethnic culture”, “world heritage”, and

“Naxi’s home” lies in it being treated as one part of a single or binary distinction in which ‘the authentic’ is opposed to its opposite, “the unauthentic”.

As an important representation of ethnic and heritage tourism in Lijiang, homestay tourism, in which the local owners (the Naxi), the guests, the local government, and international heritage-conservation authorities are all helping to contribute to the reconstruction of the ethnicity, home and the past of Lijiang, to exhibit the concept of “authenticity” at different levels. As a result, past Naxi culture has been constructed through negotiations of the different-level understandings of authenticity. In addition, from the practice of homestay-guesthouse business in Lijiang, there is little doubt to say that, the search for the “Naxi authenticity” in terms of “world heritage” conceptualized by UNESCO is only a minority pursuit, and cannot be applied to ethnic tourism and heritage tourism per se.

Chapter 6

Conclusion: Local-global Reconstruction and Naxi Authenticity

Tourism has become a strategic industry in Lijiang's development, with the global awareness of the county's potential in ethnic tourism and heritage value in the growing tourist market. The literature spawned by studies of Naxi history and its "Dongba culture" is far too extensive to be surveyed in this thesis. However, the studies on Naxi in relation to tourism development appear to lag behind the rapid tourism expansion in Lijiang in the last ten years. The ideology of "Naxi authenticity" created by numerous historical studies, now faces the complex and contentious environment found in tourism development in Lijiang. In addition, the involvement of "heritage conservation" advocated and led by UNESCO in Lijiang since 1997, has set "authenticity" as a critical issue, as asked in the questions: What is authentic Naxi culture? How to conserve authentic Naxi heritage? In this study, I provide a deeper understanding about the nature of authenticity, heritage and heritage conservation in the practice of homestay tourism in Lijiang Old Town.

I tried to explore the complexity of the relationships in homestay tourism in Lijiang Old Town in Chapter 3. I noted that Naxi hosts constantly negotiated "Naxi authenticity" with different players (including the guests, the local hotels, the migrants and the local government) to pursue economic growth through their guesthouse enterprise. These local interactions demonstrated that the local guesthouse owners were trying to identify themselves as more "seriously" concerned with Naxi culture's authenticity than other players, which conforms to the UNESCO's theme on the cultural

heritage conservation of the Naxi in Lijiang.

Next, the examination of the relationships involved in homestay tourism within the global setting in Chapter 4 demonstrates how the local guesthouse hosts interpreted and negotiated the notion of “world heritage”, as well as “heritage conservation”, with the different players (local and global ones). Hosts strategically appropriated the power of the global authorities (UNESCO, scholars, and professionals) in their guesthouse business. While Lijiang’s recognition of “World Heritage” was bringing the sense of “stewardship” to the local hosts, it also lent much power and space to the locals in bargaining their economic interests with different agencies in Lijiang. In this global encounter, where the local knowledge of the Naxi hosts seemed not capable of negotiating the multi-dimensional homestay tourism, new strategies (business cards in various languages, Internet installation, and promotion through journalists) came into being and the locals appeared apt at copying the strategies from each other.

By focusing on the practices of the Naxi guesthouse owners, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 attempt to illustrate how the locals of Lijiang Old Town select the various understandings about the Naxi from different players to construct their “authentic Naxiness” with the subjectivity through homestay tourism. Rather than “conserving” the Naxi culture and heritage, the heritage conservations in Lijiang Old Town led by UNESCO were, however, playing a part in the reconstruction of the “Naxi authenticity”. In other words, both the global and local authorities were helping the Naxi, as the subjective agents themselves, to re-construct “the authentic Naxi home” for the guests.

In Chapter 5, I rethink the three key issues concerning “homestay tourism”: ethnicity, home, and heritage within the tourism context. Based on this reevaluation, the

reconstruction of “authenticity” is explored at different levels (guests, the local government, and UNESCO). This implies that the merging of tourism and heritage has encountered inherent conflicts between these different ideas of “authenticity”. According to my survey, Lijiang’s homestay tourism, which is not as “unauthentic” or “performed/staged authentic” as many political agencies and scholars seemed to say, has, on the contrary, appeared to satisfy most of the guests on site. In this regard, I argue that in the homestay tourism in Lijiang most of the guests were actually pursuing ethnic imagery, a sense of “home”, and the “authenticity” of Naxi’s heritage. Combined, these three constitute a “comfortable-authenticity”, which coins another negotiable and indefinable authenticity different from any existing concept defined by the government, the scholars, or UNESCO. In another words, there is no fixed or innate authenticity about the past or the present in Lijiang to be found, because Naxi culture (whether past or present) is being (re)constructed by various dynamic agencies in the society.

In light of the notions of “tourism culture” and “heritage culture” raised by Boniface and Fowler (1993), I would regard “heritage” as an industry analogous to the tourism industry. This “heritage industry” produces characteristic results, in which people (hosts and guests) also tend to behave in a touristic sort of way, differently from their domestic (or, so-called authentic) lives. Consequently, I argue that the “World Heritage” project led by UNESCO is just a bigger and more powerful “industry”, which employs more players and adopts more cultural resources in (re)producing the “authentic past” of a culture through different agents and dynamics. The “world heritage industry” neither conserves (or preserving) the past culture in a timeless representation nor prevents (or protects) the past from being changed or destroyed. On the contrary, it

accelerates the process of the reproduction of the culture by offering excessive money, knowledge, and space, in short as power, to the indigenous people.

In Lijiang, when the expansion of ethnic tourism in various forms appears to diminish the “authenticity” of the Naxi culture, the involvement of “world heritage” as a global industry hand in hand with tourism has not conserved the “authentic” Naxi culture as claimed. In fact, this is not practical because different players (so-called “heritage stakeholders”) cooperate in reproducing the Naxi culture within a globalized, fast-shifting, and re-definable context. In Lijiang, homestay guesthouses became “home of homes” for different people in the area. In the search of “home sense” within homestay experience, the guests gained “comfortable authenticity”; but to the local Naxi and the migrant owners, they also found a certain kind of “existential authenticity” (cf. Wang 1999) through the homestay business. In effect, the homestay guesthouses in Lijiang were the representations of different (or mixed) version of authenticity from different groups of people.

In addition, as shown in this thesis, homestay tourism seemed to subject Naxi people to a struggle for “cultural survival”. And the concept of “World Heritage” legitimized by UNESCO makes the struggle even more severe by imposing the concept of “cultural (heritage) conservation”. However, in the name of “heritage conservation”, Naxi people are strategically interpreting and adopting the discourse of authenticity and heritage in negotiating homestay tourism for their economic survival within the complex local-global power relations as forged by tourism and heritage. Ethnic tourism in Lijiang has brought about not only economic opportunities (such as homestay business) for the locals, but also complex rhetoric of “authenticity”, “world heritage”, and “preservation”

to the community. These local-global forces derived from the ethnic tourism are (re)producing the Naxi culture into a touristic heritage culture. In this sense, the Naxi culture is still living (surviving) though not in the way it appears. As a result, we find the “authentic Naxi culture” everywhere and nowhere in Lijiang Old Town.

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